THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

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Nirav's bro in million-dollar fraud

Nehal Modi, the younger brother of Nirav Modi, was on Saturday indicted in New York for fraudulently obtaining diamonds worth over $1.4 million

Nehal told New York-based LLD Diamonds USA that he was pursuing a business relationship with Seattle-based Costco Wholesale Corporation P9

He sought and obtained diamonds worth **$2.6 million** from LLD, saying he wanted to show them to Costco for a potential sale

Nehal then pawned most of the diamonds to secure loans for personal use. The rest were sold to various retailers without LLD's authorisation

Though he paid back **$1.2 million** to LLD, a majority of the proceeds were spent for personal purposes

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AIR INDIA
A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER

Centre sends talks invite, lets agitators decide date

Unions to approach NDA partners to pressure BJP to repeal new farm laws; chalk out fresh plans for public participation in protests

HARPREET BAJWA @Chandigarh

HOURS after Union Home Minister Amit Shah indicated on Sunday that his colleague and Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar will meet representatives of protesting farmer unions in a day or two, the Centre sent a written invite for the next round of talks while asking them to choose a convenient date.

In his letter, Agriculture Ministry joint secretary Vivek Aggarwal said, "I request those previously invited protesting union leaders to provide details of their remaining concerns and doubts and suggest a date as per convenience for next round of talks."

Earlier in the day, farmer unions decided to approach allies of the ruling NDA asking them to pressure the BJP to repeal the three contentious farm laws to end the deadlock.

Addressing the media in Bolpur town of West Bengal, Amit Shah said: "I am not exactly aware of the timing, but Tomar is likely to meet the representatives of farmers tomorrow or the day after to discuss their demands."

Also, in a gesture loaded with symbolism, PM Narendra Modi made an unscheduled visit to the historic Gurdwara Rakabganj in Delhi to pay tribute to Guru Tegh Bahadur, a day after his death anniversary.

Articulating the position of farmers after a meeting of all unions at Delhi's border, Darshan Pal, president of the Krantikari Kisan Union, said, "We will approach NDA allies on December 26 and urge them to put pressure on the BJP to repeal the farm laws."

The farmer unions also decided to observe Kisan Diwas on December 23 as a day of fast, co-opting the public by urging them not to cook lunch that day so as to skip a meal in solidarity. And on December 27, when Modi's *Mann Ki Baat* programme will be on, they intend to copy his Covid time strategy of urging people to beat thalis at home till his speech is over, this time to show anti-BJP unity. Also, Haryana will be forced to be toll-free from December 25 to 27, Pal said. Besides, farmers will begin a relay hunger strike from Monday. P7

FOREIGN DONATION GLARE ON PUNJAB UNION

BKU (Ekta-Ugrahan) leader Sukhdev Singh said, "We received an email from a Central agency through our bank seeking our registration details that allow us to receive donations from abroad." He said it is part of the Centre's pressure tactics to defeat the agitation

Parliament dissolved, Nepal sets poll dates

OLI HAD NO CHOICE

Oli has gradually lost his majority in Parliament, and in the party. So he did not have many options, said Dr Nihar R Nayak, a fellow at MP-IDSA

MAYANK SINGH @ New Delhi

PUSHED to the wall by rebellion within his party, Nepal Prime Minister K P Oli Sharma on Sunday recommended the dissolution of Parliament and snap polls. Soon, President Bidya Devi Bhandari complied and announced that the first phase of general elections will be held on April 30, followed by the second phase on May 10.

According to sources, the immediate reason for the dissolution was an ordinance introduced by Oli this month on the Constitutional Council, which his rival within the party, Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' said will weaken the country's checks and balances. The council, headed by the prime minister, has the leader of opposition as one of the members. It recommends appointments to various constitutional bodies.

Among Oli's strengths was solid support from the Chinese envoy. He seems to have lost it now, said sources in the Himalayan country.

"There are multiple reasons behind Oli recommending the dissolution of Parliament, but the main problem was his autocratic style as he took all decisions on his own," said a Kathmandu-based journalist.

EXPRESS READ

Ministry calls meeting on new virus strain

New Delhi: The Union Health Ministry has called an urgent meeting of its Joint Monitoring Group on Monday to discuss the emergence of a mutated variant of the coronavirus in the United Kingdom. P7

North India reels under cold wave

New Delhi: Cold wave conditions persisted across North India on Sunday, with the national capital recording the season's lowest temperature of 3.4 degrees Celsius so far.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah during a roadshow at Bolpur in Birbhum district, West Bengal, on Sunday | PTI

New CM to be from Bengal: Shah

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Kolkata

SEEKING to take the sting out of the 'outsider' barb frequently directed at the BJP by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday asserted that the new chief minister after polls will certainly be someone from the state's soil.

"The change in people's mind is clearly visible. Mamata Banerjee's misrule will end in the upcoming elections and Bengal will get a new chief minister who is from West Bengal, not an outsider," said Shah. "When you (Mamata) were in Congress and Indira and Rajiv Gandhi visited Bengal, did you call them outsiders?" he quipped.

Without specifying any deadline for implementing the contentious Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), Shah flagged the infiltration issue and said people will usher in change in the Assembly elections to stop it. "The people of Bengal are unhappy with the infiltrators. They will bring in change to stop infiltration from the neighbouring country," Shah said at the end of a huge roadshow in Bolpur town of Birbhum.

> **The TMC can never stop infiltration as it believes in appeasement politics. Only BJP can stop it**
>
> Amit Shah, Union Home Minister

He said after the Covid-19 pandemic subsides and the vaccination process is over, the Centre will begin discussions to implement the CAA.

Impressed by the large turnout, Shah said it was a reflection of the people's love for PM Narendra Modi, adding he had never seen such a massive roadshow.

"2021 will usher in change for the development of Bengal. All BJP-ruled states have already started their journey on the path of development. You gave Congress three decades; communists over three decades; and Trinamool 10 years. Give the BJP a chance and within five years, we will make it Sonar Bangla," he said. P7

BSY, HDK spike merger talk, but support possible

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE new-found bonhomie between top leaders had fuelled speculation over the JDS inching closer to the BJP, and even a possible merger. On Sunday, Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa and JDS leader H D Kumaraswamy rubbished all such talk, but gave enough indications on having issue-based understanding between the two parties.

"There is no truth in speculation over any JDS MLAs joining BJP or its merger with our party," the CM said in a statement issued on Sunday. The JDS has only extended its support to the BJP in moving a no-confidence motion against the Legislative Council chairman but had opposed the Anti-Cow Slaughter Bill, the CM pointed out and added that Kumaraswamy had made it clear that they will not support Anti-Cow Slaughter Bill. He reiterated that it will be implemented by promulgating an ordinance. "Assembly elections are two-and-half years away and such conjecture is far from truth," the CM added.

Minutes after the CM's office issued the statement, former C M Kumaraswamy took to social media to make his stand clear. "The Janata Dal (S), which is a party of Kannadigas with self-esteem, will never think of political merger. The party, which is a strong voice of the people, will never display such stupidity," he stated and added that at the most, they may extend issue-based support to the BJP, if need be. Terming a merger with BJP as suicidal for the regional party, the former CM said, "I don't foresee such a situation in future too." P4

> **There is no truth in speculation over any JDS MLAs joining BJP or its merger with our party**
>
> B S Yeddiyurappa, Chief Minister

GRAM PANCHAYAT POLLS

Candidate's promise: Win = development, Lose = expose graft

DEVARAJ B HIREHALLI @ Tumakuru

THIS gram panchayat candidate will not go down without a fight. Even if she loses! And with an unusual manifesto which is grabbing eyeballs, she's all the rage on social media too. Her manifesto even managed to catch the attention of Primary and Secondary Education Minister S Suresh Kumar.

Phase 1 tomorrow

The first phase of the GP polls will be held on Tuesday. Voters are mostly looking forward with hope of having better roads, houses and local employment opportunities. P4

Meet **Gangamma H**, a Dalit, who is contesting from not one, but two gram panchayat seats — Kalkere and Doddaguni in Hebburu Gram Panchayat, just to be safe. While she's pitted against two men in Kalkere, she will be taking on five men in Doddaguni, which are General category seats.

And what are her poll promises? If she wins, she has listed development works like getting the title deed done in a temple's name, building a platform at a peepal tree (aralikatte), constructing a road as per the map, and a good drain to ensure free flow of rainwater.

Well, what happens if she loses? She warns that she will get the BPL ration cards of 25 'undeserving' families cancelled, get the pensions of 40 families under different schemes cancelled 'for giving false information', develop a graveyard as per the old records and evict 11 families 'who have encroached upon government land'. In a footnote, she has buttressed her claims, saying that she had got the bills for six houses under housing schemes stopped over alleged illegal allotments. CONTINUED ON: P4

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ALMANAC TODAY
Monday: 21/12/2020 • Year: Sarvari • Ayana: Dakshinayana
Ritu: Himantha • Masa: Margashira • Paksha: Shukla • Tithi: Sapthami 6.07 pm
Nakshatra: Purvabhadra 1.17 am • Moon in Meena Rashi • Rahukaala: 07:30 am to 09:00 am
Gulikakala: 01:30 pm to 03:00 pm • Yamaganda: 10:30 am to 12:00 pm

WEATHER
MIN 14°C | MAX 25°C
FORECAST
Clearing skies

Sunrise 6.37 am
Sunset 5.58 pm
Moonrise 12.05 am
Moonset 12.00 pm

Christmas surprise: Paragliding to resume on Nandi Hills from Dec 24

BOSKY KHANNA @ Bengaluru

A popular historical fortress that is home to a number of temples, monuments and shrines, Nandi Hills may soon become a paragliding hub.

The closest hill station to Bengaluru, Nandi Hills is an ideal place for the people of the city to unwind in the beauty of nature, although people have been experiencing heavy traffic jams on the way to the hills, specially on weekends. Some even compared it with the bottleneck traffic snarls of Silk Board.

To change this image, the tourism and horticulture department wants to start recreational activities, including paragliding. The destination is also sought after by bird watching groups, as it is home to many endemic bird species and is also an ideal habitat for migratory birds.

The tourism, horticulture, police and other related agencies have given permission to a private company to conduct paragliding from Nandi Hills for three months, starting December 24. While some conservationists and officials from Karnataka forest department have expressed apprehension as it would have an impact on the migratory birds and could also lead to man- animal conflict, they demand extra caution.

"After a very long time, paragliding is being organised at Nandi Hills. This year, to promote tourism, permission was given to three companies, but none of them could take off because of delay in getting clearance from other agencies. This time again, permission has been given and hopefully it will take off," said Rajendra Kumar Kataria, Principal Secretary of Horticulture department.

> **Earlier, people would seek permission for paragliding in Bramhagiri and Skandagiri, stating that Nandi Hills is not suitable. But when permissions were denied, they would settle for Nandi Hills**
>
> Arsalan, DCF, Chikkaballapur

Bangalore Aviation and Sports Enterprise (Base) Proprietor, Kumara Swamy, who is organising paragliding, said that it could not be organised till now as they didn't have clearance from the international airport management. "Now, approval from DGCA and all government agencies has been procured. Paragliding will start from the fort area belonging to the horticulture department," he added.

Chikkaballapur Deputy Commissioner R Latha said permission has been given only till this month end and they will consider for the next three months later.

Arsalan, Deputy Conservator of Forests, Chikkaballapur said, "Earlier, people would seek permission for paragliding in Bramhagiri and Skandagiri, stating that Nandi Hills is not suitable. But when permissions were denied, they would settle for Nandi Hills. People are not allowed to enter forest areas or disurb wildlife."

Rural pvt schools to stop e-classes as govt fails to meet their demands

Forum sought ₹1,000-cr relief package from govt to pay salaries of five lakh teachers

PEARL MARIA DSOUZA @ Bengaluru

PRIVATE schools, especially in rural Karnataka, will suspend online classes from Monday, with the State government failing to meet their demands. The schools, under the aegis of Recognised Unaided Private Schools Association (RUPSA) had sought a Rs 1,000-crore relief package from the government, to pay salaries of five lakh teachers.

School managements say they are under loss due to the government's decision on fee payment, and have demanded that a minimum fee structure be fixed.

RUPSA state president Lokesh Talikatte told TNIE that the government was only catering to one section of schools. He said the ministerial level delegation that met to decide on reopening of schools, had in their midst administrators of corporate schools, CBSE and ICSE schools, whereas a meeting with budget school administrators from RUPSA only got an audience with the commissioner of public instruction. RUPSA represents more than 12,000 schools, predominantly from rural areas, he said.

There was no response to their demands, such as a moratorium on loans, postponement of EMI payment, and relief package from the government, Talikatte said. Schools have invested in vehicles and new buildings, he said. Another major hindrance was the mandatory No Objection Certificate by the PWD and fire department, he added.

Some question boycott

Meanwhile, the Karnataka Associated Managements of English Medium Schools (KAMS), an association of more than 3,800 private schools, has decided against the boycott. KAMS general secretary D Shashi Kumar said that online classes will continue. "We had earlier said that those who haven't paid fees would be kept out, however, the education department assured us that it would resolve the issue," he said.

Sathyamurthy, vice-president of Karnataka Unaided Schools Management Association also denied being party to the boycott of online classes, and said that members are ready for online and offline classes. The Management of Independent CBSE Schools' Association -Karnataka (MICSA-K) made it clear that online classes would continue and any other reports are misleading, secretary Mansoor Ali Khan said.

Minister wants parties to sort out issue

Minister for Primary and Secondary Education S Suresh Kumar, sympathising with parents who have faced attrition and pay cuts, said seeking a discounted fee amount isn't wrong. However, he also voiced the concerns of private school managements, especially budget schools, whose teachers are in dire straits. With non-payment of fees, schools are finding it difficult to pay salaries to teachers. Although the government planned various measures to remedy this crisis, it never came to fruition, considering the financial situation of the government. He requested the two factions to reach a consensus among themselves.

Parents protest, seek clarity on schools' expenditure

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

MORE than 400 parents from across Bengaluru, with wards in CBSE, CISCE and SSLC schools, sat in protest at Mysore Bank Circle till Sunday noon, seeking redressal on the issue of fees.

They urged the government against issuing any order to collect second term fees, and demanded a clear picture of the expenditure schools have incurred.

Shakeel, a parent, told TNIE that they are demanding transparency in expenditure for at least two years, and are only learning about inconsistencies in fees as time passes. Several students have been denied access to online classes, added Shakeel.

The fee problem is stark in these economically difficult times. For the second time in a month, parents are approaching the education minister for redressal.

Shakeel said that neither the letter to the CMO, nor the education minister on November 17, or the one to the commissioner of public instruction on November 27 received any response.

Parents had earlier listed an array of issues to be addressed, but failing redressal, they are now demanding clarity on tuition fee.

"Earlier, schools were asked to charge only tuition fees. Now, the government has asked schools to collect fees for one term, but there is no clarity on what that means," said Shakeel. "There was sufficient evidence that 10-30 per cent of teachers and staff are laid off, and salaries cut by about 50 per cent." Since schools have conducted only online classes, fees should be reduced by 25 per cent, they said. Parents have also demanded legal action against private corporate schools restricting online classes.

Shivajinagar MLA Rizwan Arshad and BBMP Commissioner N Manjunatha Prasad participate in the clean-up drive in Ward 63. (Below) Many youngsters have come forward to volunteer with 'Project Shivajinagar' in Bengaluru | MEGHANA SASTRY

Project Shivajinagar: BBMP, NGOs clear 10 black spots over weekend

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

AS a part of a larger campaign called #ProjectShivajinagar, BBMP along with NGOs cleared ten mega black spots in the area over the weekend.

According to BBMP officials, five black spots were cleared on Saturday and the other five were cleaned on Sunday. "Citizens and contractors have not paid enough attention to the garbage crisis. From Monday, door-to-door garbage collection drive will start, with proper scientific transportation and disposal of waste. So, far daily waste collection was not given priority in this ward," the official said.

The campaign was kick started by MLA Rizwan Arshad and on Sunday, DCP East Sharanappa launched the beautification and greening initiative. The group Ugly Indians painted the walls and and beautified the ward.

BBMP officials said that the project will also focus on spreading awareness about cleanliness, proper waste segregation and waste disposal. After getting feedback from the pilot project, the next areas in the pipeline for such solid waste management drives are Ulsoor and Benson Town.

Daily Starscope

PETER VIDAL

21st December: It's the winter solstice today, which means that it's the shortest day in the north, and the longest in the far south. If you are close to the tropics you won't even notice! Most ancient cultures celebrated the day with great ceremonies intended to encourage the Sun to begin a new period of health and prosperity.

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)
Spend as much time as necessary dealing with domestic and family affairs. Even if you're at work, your concentration will be distracted by thoughts of what must be done at home. Your romantic confidence should improve, so you might be ready to approach someone you're rather fond of.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)
The important task now is to talk about your feelings. Nothing else will do. It may also be necessary to take a few short journeys, probably in pursuit of outstanding family business. It could be a relief to resolve a lingering problem. Your social stars look bright by the way, so don't be shy.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
You really must make an early start if you want to get the most out of the day. You should realise, however, that the determining factor will be the amount of money you have in your pocket, not to mention the cost of those items which are necessary to your plans.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
You may be slightly unsure of yourself, but that's understandable. This is probably no bad thing, for a little self-doubt will encourage you to question your preconceptions and hence to do a great deal better next time around. There's room for improvement, as you know!

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23)
You may be inclined to spend more time by yourself, away from troublesome human company. Whether this is possible or not is another matter. After all, you can't just abandon all your commitments with the wave of a hand. And, if someone entrusts you with a secret, you must respect their confidence.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23)
Your social stars are strong - and you'll do well if you link up with like-minded people. That way, even the most controversial ideas could succeed. At work, you will do best if you take the long-range point of view and avoid being bogged down in short-term details.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23)
The professional picture looks fairly positive, and you may be required to take on new responsibilities - and accept authority over other people. In all matters you should be prepared to play a maternal and compassionate role, even with complete strangers!

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22)
You have to do the right thing. Lingering legal questions should be answered as soon as possible, and moral issues should be faced head-on. Also, take the chance to get in touch with family members overseas, especially people you haven't seen for some time.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 22)
Business and financial plans require more attention, especially if you've taken a risk or got involved in a possibly awkward joint enterprise. Take an inventive approach and realise that old solutions may no longer be the best. And that goes for romantic affairs as well.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 23 - Jan. 20)
You will have to listen to other people - and take their very good advice. More important, though, is the necessity of understanding their feelings and making a much greater effort to sympathise with their point of view. A generous spirit should win the day.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19)
Work must take the first priority today, even if social concerns constitute the major long-term question. You should recognise that there may be no decision concerning one important emotional tie for a little while longer. Please be patient.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar 20)
Love is the most important thing at the moment, but it is by no means certain that there is any one relationship that pre-occupies you. It is your friends who can benefit from your new mood, so make a point of spreading any goodwill as widely as you can.

THE PHANTOM

KADRA SAHARA...
SHE'S BEEN THROUGH A LOT, SHE'S FRAGILE, WE ALL CARE FOR HER...
IT'S GOOD THAT HELOISE ALMOST NEVER LEAVES HER SIDE.
DR. THORBJORN AXEL IS A GOOD HIGH SCHOOL, I BELIEVE!
WHY ARE WE GOING TO THE HIMALAYAS ON THIS WILD GUESS ABOUT KIT AND KADRA?

HI AND LOIS

BEETLE BAILEY

REMEMBER THE OLD RECRUITING SLOGAN, "IT'S NOT JUST A JOB, IT'S AN ADVENTURE"?
YEAH
LOTS OF PEOPLE ARE LOOKING FOR WORK THESE DAYS
U.S. ARMY
IT'S A JOB!

BLONDIE

WE MET AT AN ENGAGEMENT PARTY FOR MY SISTER THAT YOU CATERED
OH, THAT'S A LOVELY STORY
NOW WE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE YOU CATER OUR OWN ENGAGEMENT PARTY
WONDERFUL!
SO OBVIOUSLY, WE THINK IT WOULD BE GOOD LUCK FOR US IF YOU CATERED IT FOR 1/2 THE PRICE OF MY SISTER'S!
GOOD LUCK!

LOCKHORNS

DENNIS THE MENACE

Test your number crunching skill with our unique puzzle

SUDOKU

1	5		6	4				2
			8		2	9		
2	3			7		8		
	2	6			4			
7	4						2	8
			2			4	9	
		5		2			6	9
		4	9		1			
8				6	7		5	4

EASY

- Fill in the grid with digits in such a manner that every row, every column and every 3X3 box accommodates the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.
- Each sudoku has a unique solution that can be reached logically without guessing.

Solutions to Saturday's puzzle

2	6	1	4	5	7	3	8	9
3	8	7	9	6	1	2	5	4
5	9	4	2	3	8	7	6	1
6	2	9	3	1	5	4	7	8
4	1	5	8	7	2	6	9	3
8	7	3	6	9	4	5	1	2
9	5	6	1	2	3	8	4	7
1	3	8	7	4	6	9	2	5
7	4	2	5	8	9	1	3	6

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

CWIET

DENKE

TYOERH

MRUNEB

That sounds familiar.
You all better run away from this. I'm all in!
You said that exact thing last time you were bluffing!
THEIR POKER BUDDY TRIED TO BLUFF, BUT THEY ---

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

"_____"

(Answers Monday)

Saturday's Jumbles: GULCH KNELT PETITE BEWARE
Answer: They successfully drilled for water, and it helped with everyone's — WELL-BEING THERE

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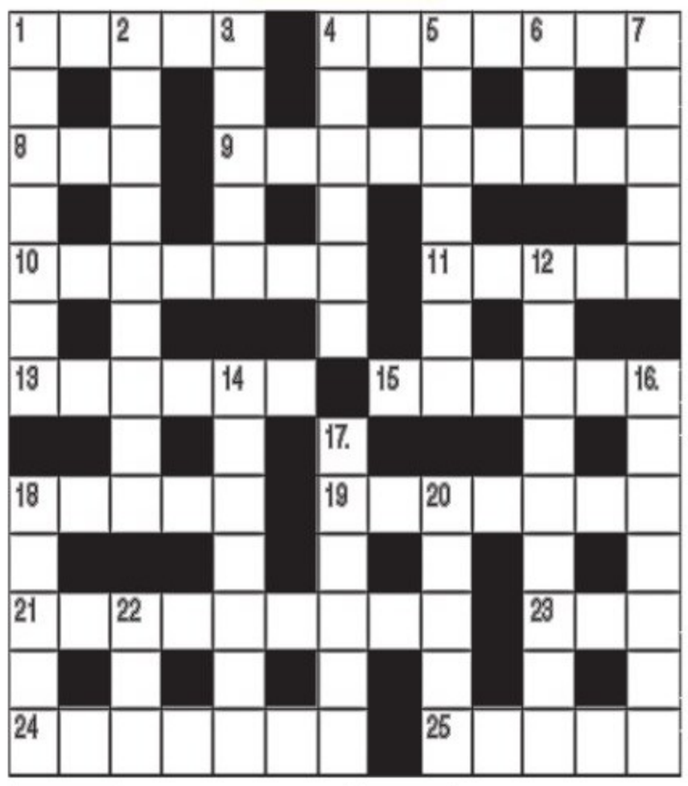
CROSS WORD



ACROSS

1 He's out of work but has expectations (5)
4 Gets over life's burdens (7)
8 Powerful vessel returns in the narrow channel (3)
9 Such a person may not use his tongue when speaking (9)
10 Runner allowed to take part in a different heat (7)
11 Two provide support (5)
13 Many a scoundrel shows the way the wind blows (6)
15 Awards for zero marks? (6)
18 From which convicts once had their pick (5)
19 Render an account (7)
21 Set free and handed over (9)
23 Letter used in teaching Greek (3)
24 Decreed changes be withdrawn (7)
25 It's bound to be a bit of a shock (5)

DOWN

1 She helped in a novel way to get him a title (7)
2 Repairing a quilt? (9)
3 Weapon for killing wild bears (5)
4 He can either phone or come round in person (6)
5 Large volume of transport? (7)
6 It's very classy to have little money (3)
7 Loves to find way to finish a puzzle (5)
12 A snowdrop (9)
14 Still not showing emotion (7)
16 Berber woman who keeps the law (7)
17 A woman riding the second half first (6)
18 The sequence of command (5)
20 Travels with Rex on a fatal date (5)
22 Sounds like a shortage of resin (3)

SATURDAY'S SOLUTIONS

Across: 1 Martingale, 8 Fitly, 9 Stratum, 10 Recital, 11 Amaze, 12 Toecap, 14 Alumni, 17 Igloo, 19 Silence, 21 Hashish, 22 Bigot, 23 Signallers.

Down: 2 Attache, 3 Tryst, 4 Nestle, 5 Air mail, 6 Extra, 7 Impenitent, 8 First light, 13 Adoring, 15 Manager, 16 Asthma, 18 Lists, 20 Label.

Reuse of surgical, cloth masks inadvisable

If people still do so, they have a higher chance of catching virus if they come in contact with Covid patients: Experts

3 TYPES OF MASKS

Triple or double layer surgical masks: These surgical masks are loosely fitted and can protect one from large particle droplets. they can also filter out smaller aerosol particles. Experts state is it better to dispose of the surgical masks after every use.

Cloth masks: Homemade face masks only offer a small degree of protection, but they may help prevent the transmission of SARS-CoV-2 from asymptomatic people. The CDC recommends using them in public settings, as well as practising physical distancing and proper hygiene. It can be disinfected and reused.

N95 mask: An N95 respirator is a more tight-fitted mask. In addition to splashes, sprays, and large droplets, this respirator can also filter out 95% trusted source of very small particles. These masks can be reused for up to five-seven days.

IFFATH FATHIMA @ Bengaluru

FACE masks safeguards people against Covid infection, but many tend to reuse masks which reduce their efficacy, warn experts. Many people use triple-layer surgical masks as they are easily available at pharmacies and are affordable. But these masks are worn over many days and experts have warned against this.

Dr C Nagraj, Director, Rajiv Gandhi Institute Of Chest Diseases, said, "The triple-layer mask is effective only for 4-5 hours and one has to dispose it of after that. If people continue to wear it, they have a higher chance of catching the infection if they come in contact with a Covid-positive patient. This mask tends to become loose and it does not block small particles in air that can be transmitted through sneezing or coughing."

A study published by researchers of the University of Massachusetts Lowell and California Baptist University found that re-wearing of a three-layer surgical mask is as good as not wearing one. While pleated three-layer surgical masks are 65 per cent effective in filtering air particles, their efficacy drops to 25 per cent when they are used more than once.

Experts said that even the use of cloth masks is not advisable. "The cloth mask is not ideal for prevention. As the virus is very small, it can pass through small pores in the mask. A lot of people wash their mask and reuse them which is not recommended as it contaminates the mask," said

Dr Sunil Kumar K, Consultant, Interventional Pulmonology, Aster CMI Hospital.

Dr Nagaraj advised that like the surgical triple-layer mask, the cloth mask too should be used only for four to five hours a day.

Dr Hirenappa Udnur, Consultant - Pulmonologist, Columbia Asia Hospital Hebbal, said, "Triple-layer masks and cotton masks are are less effective if you are close to a Covid positive person or you have symptoms of Covid."

Experts suggested that people can opt for N95 mask and it can also be reused. "It can be reused with proper sterilisation. Though these masks are not meant for reuse, with other protection like PPE and face shield, one can reuse a N95 mask," said Dr Udnur.

One can wear a reused N95 mask up to seven days. Only of people wearing masks maintain a 6 ft distance, will the risk of infection fall to zero per cent, said Dr Nagaraju

BBMP Commissioner Manjunatha Prasad and administrator Gaurav Gupta (middle) participate in a cyclothon in Bengaluru on Sunday | NAGARAJA GADEKAL

Pedalling for Fit India

ENS @Bengaluru

TO encourage fitness among the public, Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) Commissioner N Manjunatha Prasad and Administrator Gaurav Gupta flagged off the Fit India Cyclothon, an initiative with the tag "Pedal your way to fitness" on Sunday.

They also participated in the event, along with other Covid warriors and citizens. The cyclothon was a part of the Fit India campaign, organised by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.

Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports as a part of the Fit India Movement.

Speaking to the media at the sidelines of the event, Prasad said, "As a part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of a fit and healthy India, the cyclothon was held."

Project Bharavase helped rural Covid warriors, needy weather pandemic

CHETANA BELAGERE @Bengaluru

AN entrepreneur, a policeman, two NGOs and hundreds of like-minded people have teamed up to help rural people in Karnataka through the pandemic, with 'Project Bharavase' launched in July. Entrepreneur Dr Karthik Narayanan, who worked with late President Dr APJ Abdul Kalam's Vision 2020 programme, realised that young graduates found it difficult to find jobs due to lack of communication and core skills. To address this, he launched Sugaradhana in Bengaluru.

"Many youngsters who are extremely capable and graduate with high marks are left with no jobs as they don't have communication skills and lack exposure to English and technology. Sugaradhana started providing these skills," he said.

But when the pandemic struck, Dr Narayanan realised there were more immediate needs that required attention. He teamed up with RDC Foundation, Samanvaya Trust and IPS officer Ravi Channanavar, and transformed 'Sugaradhana' into 'Project Bharavase' (Project Trust). Through its network, the project distributed foodgrains to the poor and homeless, and supplied cooked food, masks and sanitiser to frontline workers on the ground across rural Karnataka. They also contributed groceries and cooked food to government-run shelters, slums and the homeless, and even fed stray dogs and cats.

"We also conducted education seminars for rural teachers and students, and training programmes for farmers. Our team provided medical assistance to the needy who didn't have basic insurance to manage hospital expenses due to Covid. We conducted empowerment workshops for women to help them sustain their businesses during the pandemic and ensure a steady income while working from home," said Dr Narayanan.

Next on their agenda is to spray bio enzyme (also referred to garbage enzyme or fruit enzyme) throughout Bengaluru. Bio enzymes are natural insect and germ repellents made from vegetable or fruit peels (usually citrus) or waste, and are said to protect against microbes.

Dr Narayanan said that Ravi Channanavar had volunteered to be part of the initiative. "He is helping a lot by creating and promoting awareness on women's safety and drug awareness campaigns. We have teamed up with the police, NGOs and government bodies for this," he said.

Dr Narayanan said, "To encourage sports among rural students, RSF-Bangalore will identify talent and give them opportunities and support."

For village development programmes, the team has joined hands with local government officials. Another member of the team said that by October 2021, Project Bharavase initiatives will reach 1,000 villages across Karnataka, with a head coordinator each who acts as a role model.

Maskless Mysureans throng anthills across city

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Mysuru

COVID-19 norms went for a toss as thousands of devotees sans masks, ignoring physical distancing norms, thronged anthills and temples across Mysuru to offer milk as part of Subramanya Shasti.

While the district administration had banned the entry of devotees to the Subramanyeshwara Swamy temple in Siddalingapura, most of the people went to the anthills and temples near their houses to give offerings.

Many believe that offering milk to the anthills on shasti day would relieve them from 'Sarpa Dosha'. Dressed up in traditional attire, they made serpentine queues in front of the anthills and temples.

Though several temples had made arrangements to follow social distancing, people who flocked to anthills on vacant lands, sports ground and near temples were seen falling on each other while offering milk and butter.

University of Calcutta wins APU's Social Enterprise Idea Challenge

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE University of Calcutta's team won the Azim Premji University's Social Enterprise 'Idea' Challenge. This year, the fifth edition of the challenge was on the response to the Covid-19 crisis.

The winning team presented a project titled Jal Kumbi, that creates floating gardens in ponds to cultivate organic vegetables and create employment for the Musahar community, which comprises landless labourers.

The teams from Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI), New Delhi, and Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, were the first and second runners-up respectively. JMI presented a plan to manufacture biodegradable face masks and sanitary napkins from abaca fibres to reduce the accumulation of waste and a cheaper alternative to disposable masks and sanitary napkins.

IIT-D presented a solution for minimising direct and indirect transmission of Covid through two products named 'Visage' and 'Cov-Ring'. Visage comprises a cotton mask and a PET visor attached to it to prevent droplet transmission. Cov-Ring is a type of hand gear designed to prevent direct skin exposure to surfaces.

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BEFORE THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-II
No.4, LIC Jeevan Mangal Building, Residency Road, at Bengaluru
O.A. No.1392/2019

BETWEEN
CANARA BANK (E-Syndicate Bank)
Kumaraswamy Layout Branch, Bangalore.
...Applicant

AND
Rajashekar murthy, Proprietor of M/s. Phoenix Switch Gear ...Defendant
01. Sri Rajashekar murthy , S/o late. T.M.Mallaiah, Aged about 54 years, Prop: M/s. Phoenix Switchgears, No.38/1, 9th Cross, Hallu Narasimhappa Road, Kuvempu Nagar, Dodcakallasandra, Bengaluru -560062. Ph: 9902784265. **PAN: AALPH7940R**, **Also at**: No.12, 1st Main, 1st Cross, Kalidasa Layout, Srinagar, Bengaluru-560050. **Also at** No.3181, 7th Main, 3rd Cross, Srinagar, Bangalore-560085.
...Defendant

SUMMONS ISSUED UNDER RULE 23(Viii) OF THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL (PROCEEDURE) RULES 1993.

Whereas, the Applicant has instituted an application under Section 19 of the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 against you for the recovery of a sum of **Rs.4,10,060/- (Rupees Four lakh Ten thousand and Sixty only)** towards Term Loan facility **(A/c No.06847910000013)** together with current and future interest thereon at the rate of 11.50% p.a.compounded monthly and **Rs.27,32,550/-(Rupees Twenty Seven Lakh Thirty Two thousand Five Hundred and Fifty only)** towards Overdraft Loan facility (A/c No.0684140000019) together with current and future interest thereon at the rate of 10.75% p.a. compounded monthly with costs and other reliefs. Thus totally a sum of **Rs.31,42,610/-(Rupees Thirty One lakh Forty Two thousand Six Hundred and Ten Only)**. You are hereby required to show cause within 30 days from the date of this publication or **on 01.02.2021 at 10.30 a.m.**in the forenoon in person or by a pleader/ Advocate duly instructed as to why the relief prayed for should not be granted. Take notice that in case of default, the Application will be heard and determined in your absence. Given under my hand the seal of this tribunal on this **27th day of October,2020.**

By the order of the Tribunal
Sd/- Registrar,
DEBT RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-II, Bengaluru

BEFORE THE DEBT RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-II
No.4, LIC Jeevan Mangal Building, Residency Road, at Bengaluru
O.A. No.1318/2019

BETWEEN:
CANARA BANK (E-Syndicate Bank)
Kumaraswamy Layout Branch, Bangalore.
...Applicant

AND
Manoj and Others ...Defendants
01. Sri Manoj S/o Sri Venkatappa Beeranna Nayak, Aged about 37 years, **Telephone: 9844977885, PAN: BRQPM7014L**
02. Smt. Lakshmi.R., W/o. Sri Manoj, Aged about 31 years, Both are residing at: No.3, Sri Shakti Nilaya, Kalastri Nagar, T.Dasarahalli, Bengaluru-560057.
03. M/s. Elegant Builders and Developers, A partner ship firm having its registered office at: No.1/116, New Kempegowda Layout, Banashankri 3rd Stage, 4th Cross, Bangalore-560085. **PAN: AADFE0590L.**
...Defendants

SUMMONS ISSUED UNDER RULE 23(Viii) OF THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL (PROCEEDURE) RULES 1993.

Whereas, the Applicant has instituted an application under Section 19 of the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 against you for the recovery of a sum of **Rs.68,80,658.61/- (Rupees Sixty Eight lakhs Eighty thousand Six Hundred Fifty Eight and Paise Sixty One only)** towards Housing Loan facility together with current and future interest thereon at the rate of 10.75% p.a.compounded monthly. You are hereby required to show cause within 30 days from the date of this publication or **on 1.2.2021 at 10.30 a.m.**in the forenoon in person or by a pleader/Advocate duly instructed as to why the relief prayed for should not be granted. Take notice that in case of default, the Application will be heard and determined in your absence. Given under my hand the seal of this tribunal on this **27th day of October, 2020.**

By the order of the Tribunal
Sd/- Registrar,
DEBT RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-II, Bengaluru

PUBLIC NOTICE

I hereby call upon the pubic at large that my clients intend to purchase the schedule property from **MR. N V BABU @ NARAYANA VENKATARAM BABU** Son of Sri B. Narayana, Residing at AGB Trust Building, Second Floor, 20/3, Cambridge Road, Ulsoor, Bangalore-560 008 if any person or persons to have any claim or right over the schedule property or part of it may kindly send their statement of objections in support with documents within **10 days** from the date of publication of this notice to the undersigned. If no objections are received with documents, then my clients will proceed to purchase the schedule property as there is no third party or claim created on it.

SCHEDULE

All the piece and parcel of the Residential immovable Property bearing **Corporation No.30 (Old No. 321)** situated at 9th Cross Road, Wilson Garden, Bangalore in Corporation **PID No 62-113-30**, measuring **EAST to WEST 80 FEET, NORTH to SOUTH 50 FEET,** in total **4000 square feet,** from **MR. N V BABU @ NARAYANA VENKATARAM BABU** Son of Sri. B.Narayana, Residing at AGB Trust Building, Second Floor, 20/3, Cambridge Road, Ulsoor, Bangalore-560 008 and bounded as follows :-

East By : Property bearing No. 320
West by : 9th Cross Road, Wilson Garden
North by: Property bearing No 322
South by: Property bearing No. 324.

M/S. S.H.S. RAMAMURTHY & ASSOCIATES, Advocates
No.27/31, III Floor, Opp. 10th Cross, Cubbonpet Main Road, BANGALORE-560 002. (M) 9845143642

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Keishampat Junction, Imphal - 795001
Corporate Office: Electricity Complex, Patta No. 1293 under 87(2), Khwai Bazar, Keishampat, Imphal-795001, Manipur, India. Tele: +91385 2450050, Fax: +91385 2450702

No. 4/41/33KV/L-BAY(UTLOU)/2020/MSPCL(PURCH)/2188-93 Imphal, the 18th December 2020

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

The Managing Director, Manipur State Power Company Ltd (MSPCL), a Government of Manipur Enterprises invites sealed tenders in triplicate from eligible turnkey firms who have experienced in the field of the same nature of work for execution for the following works.

Tender Specification No.	Particulars	NIT value (inclusive of GST)	Cost of Tender Paper	Last date of receipt of request for Tender Paper	Due date of receipt of completed Tender	Due date of Opening of Tender
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4/9/20	Construction of 1 No. of Line Bay at 33/11kV Substation, Utlou (Nambol) on turnkey basis.	Rs. 82.97 Lakh.	Rs. 10,000/-	29.12.2020 upto 4.30 p.m.	11.01.2021 upto 4.30 p.m.	13.01.2021 at 2.00 p.m.

2. Bidding Documents shall be available from the office of the Managing Director, Manipur State Power Company Limited, Keishampat, Imphal-795001, Manipur, India.
3. The application request for the NIT along with cost of the tender paper (Non-refundable) shown above, in the form of Demand Draft / D-at-Call / FDR / Banker Cheque from a Nationalized / Scheduled Bank preferably having its branch at Imphal (preferably State Bank of India), drawn in favour of the Managing Director, Manipur State Power Company Limited should be submitted to the Managing Director, Manipur State Power Company Limited, Keishampat, Imphal-7950001, Manipur, India.

Sd/- (N. Sarat Singh),
Managing Director, MSPCL

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD

INVITATION FOR TENDER (Only Through e-procurement Portal)

BWSSB invites Tenders from Registered Agencies for the following works.

Office of the Chief Engineer (Design), 9th Floor, Kaveri Bhavan, KG Road, Bengaluru-560009.

Sl No.	Division	IFT Number	Amount put to tender / EMD (in Rs.)	Last date & time for Submission of Tender	Date & time for Opening of Tender
1	Quality Assurance	BWSSB/EQATE/JE/15-2020/888/ 2020-21 Date: 16.12.2020	Rs. 42.48 Lakhs / Rs. 85,000/-	04.01.2021 upto 4.00 pm	06.01.2021 at 3.30 pm
					Sd/- Executive Engineer (Quality Assurance)
2	MIS	BWSSB/EMS/TE/MS1/AE/325/ 2020-21Date: 17.12.2020	Rs. 40,27,060/- / Rs. 80,541/-	05.01.2021 upto 4.00 pm	07.01.2021 at 4.00 pm
3		BWSSB/EMS/TE/MS1/AE/326/ 2020-21 Date: 17.12.2020	Rs. 61.08 Lakhs / Rs. 1.22 Lakhs	06.01.2021 upto 4.00 pm	08.01.2021 at 4.00 pm
					Sd/- Executive Engineer (MIS)
4	(DC & BVM)	BWSSB/EE(Design-Civil&BVM)/PB /843/2020-21 Date: 08.12.2020	Rs. 1,50,000/- (EMD)	11.01.2021 upto 4.00 pm	13.01.2020 at 12.00 noon
5		BWSSB/EE(DC&BVM)D/PB/BVM/ 999/2020-21 Date: 14.12.2020	Rs. 43,93,296/- / Rs. 87,866/-	29.12.2020 upto 4.00 pm	31.12.2020 at 12.00 noon
6		BWSSB/EE(DC&BVM)D/PB/BVM/ 997/2020-21 Date: 14.12.2020	Rs. 9.60 Lakhs / Rs. 24,000/-		
					Sd/- Executive Engineer (DC&BVM)
Office of the Chief Engineer (WWM), 5th Floor, Kaveri Bhavan, KG Road, Bengaluru-560009.					
7	WWM-H	BWSSB/EE(WWM)-H/PB-2/1081/ 2020-21 Date: 16.12.2020	Rs. 75.00 Lakhs / Rs. 1.50 Lakhs	04.01.2021 upto 5.30 pm	06.01.2021 at 12.00 noon
8		BWSSB/EE(WWM)H/PB-3/1019/ 2020-21 Date: 07.12.2020	Rs. 49.447 Lakhs / Rs. 99,000/-		
					Sd/- Executive Engineer (WWM-Hebbal)
9	WWM (K&T Valley)	BWSSB/EWKT/PB/1201/2020-21 Date: 11.12.2020	Rs. 64.19 Lakhs / Rs. 1.28 Lakhs	29.12.2020 upto 4.00 pm	30.12.2020 at 4.05 pm
					Sd/- Executive Engineer (WWM-K&T Valley)
Office of the Chief Engineer (Kaveri), 5th Floor, Kaveri Bhavan, KG Road, Bengaluru-560009.					
10	K-3	BWSSB/EK3TE/AE1/06/2020/1016 /2020-21 Date: 11.12.2020	Rs. 13,03,200/- / Rs. 32,580/-	28.12.2020 upto 4.00 pm	30.12.2020 at 4.00 pm
					Sd/- Executive Engineer (K-3)
Office of the Chief Engineer (East), 7th Floor, Kaveri Bhavan, KG Road, Bengaluru-560009.					
11	(South-East)-2	BWSSB/EE(SE-2)/PB/2483/ 2020-21 Date: 17.12.2020	Rs. 5,86,245/- / Rs. 14,700/-	28.12.2020 upto 4.00 pm	30.12.2020 after 4.30 pm
12		BWSSB/EE(SE-2)/PB/2485/ 2020-21 Date: 17.12.2020 **(Reserved For SC Category)**	Rs. 9,12,439.63 / Rs. 11,410/-		
13		BWSSB/EE(SE-2)/PB/2487/ 2020-21 Date: 17.12.2020 **(Reserved For ST Category)**	Rs. 4,41,963/- / Rs. 5,600/-		
14		BWSSB/EE(SE-2)/PB/2489/ 2020-21 Date: 17.12.2020 **(Reserved For SC Category)**	Rs. 13,63,827/- / Rs. 17,100/-		
15		BWSSB/EE(SE-2)/PB/2491/ 2020-21 Date: 17.12.2020	Rs. 27,88,668/- / Rs. 55,800/-		
16		BWSSB/EE(SE-2)/PB/2493/ 2020-21 Date: 17.12.2020	Rs. 22,19,812/- / Rs. 50,000/-		
17		BWSSB/EE(SE-2)/PB/2495/ 2020-21 Date: 17.12.2020	Rs. 13,35,227/- / Rs. 33,400/-		
					Sd/- Executive Engineer (South-East)-2
18	(South East)-1	BWSSB/EE(SE)-1/PB/2156/ 2020-21 Date: 16.12.2020	1 Rs. 20,26,314/- / Rs. 50,000/-	05.01.2021upto 4.00 pm	06.01.2021 after 5.00 pm
19			2 Rs. 21,56,753/- / Rs. 50,000/-		
20			3 Rs. 7,45,985/- / Rs. 18,700/-		
					Sd/- Executive Engineer (South-East)-1
Office of the Chief Engineer (West), 6th Floor, Kaveri Bhavan, KG Road, Bengaluru-560009.					
21	North	BWSSB/ENTE/AE-1/1725/2020-21 Date: 18.12.2020	Rs. 9,09,685/- / Rs. 22,800/-	28.12.2020 upto 3.00 pm	29.12.2020 at 4.00 pm
					Sd/- Executive Engineer (North)

The Details regarding participation in the e-procurement portal process can be obtained by logging on to http://eproc.karnataka.gov.in For further details contact the undersigned office during working hours.

DIPR/DDU/Zen/R.O:2104/2020-21

STAY PROTECTED FROM COVID-19, NO CARELESSNESS UNTIL THERE IS A CURE.
Wear Mask | 6 Feet Follow Physical Distancing | Maintain Hand Hygiene

CLASSIFIEDS

PUBLIC NOTICE
CHANGE OF NAME

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **NALINI CHITTA,** aged about 38 years, W/o Kiran Ramesh Raghavendra Chitta, residing at Villa B17, Skanda Avani C99, Mullur, Kodathi Gate, Bangalore 560 035, i have changed my Name **NALINI JAMMULAMADAKA** (Old Name) to **NALINI CHITTA,** (New Name) vide Affidavit Dated 19.12.2020 before notary H.S. Sakalesh Aradhya, Advocate & Notary, No.1046, 6th Main, Vijayanagar, Bangalore - 560040

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **(OLD NAME) ZAINAB SANEEN RASHEEDH WAHEED** D/o Rasheedh, Residing at No. 205/1, Site No. 55, 1st A Cross, OMBR Layout, Chikkabanaswadi, Kalyan Nagar, Bangalore - 560 043 have changed my name to **(NEW NAME) ZAINAB SANEEN RASHEEDH** vide affidavit dated 17.12.2020 sworn before notary Prakash. C, Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, Sandeep.V, Aged 21 years, S/o. Vijay Kumar.G, residing at Flat No.103, BM Bhavisha 34, Trinity Complex, Sompura Gate, Sarjapura Road, Sompura, Bengaluru - 562 125. In some documents my name is mentioned as **SUNDEEP.V**. I hereby declare that both the names pertain to the one and the same person i.e., **SANDEEP.V**. Vide Affidavit dated 19.12.2020. Sworn before Advocate and Notary N.Shankar, Bengaluru.

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What's wrong if the RSS is behind the struggle for the Kuruba community for the ST reservation quota, said ZP member K E Kanthesh, who is also the son of RDPR Minister K S Eshwarappa. He claimed all party leaders had expressed their support for the struggle.

STRAWS IN THE WIND

A lesson in diplomacy

Former Minister and JDS MLA GT Devegowda pulled off a razor-edge balancing act when asked about the mudslinging between HD Kumaraswamy and Siddaramaiah on who contributed most to the collapse of the coalition government. The MLA, who's been keeping a prickly distance from the JDS from some time now, and has a newfound affinity for the grand old party, apart from a famed soft corner for the BJP, pointed fingers at both. Siddaramaiah and Kumaraswamy are responsible for the collapse of the coalition, he said, but not for the en masse defections pulled off by the BJP. Cementing his case, he said that both knew about the breakdown, but did nothing to prevent it. However, he went soft on friend-turned-foe Siddaramaiah commenting on losing Chamundeshwari to him, saying he was just expressing "his pain". Quite the trapeze artiste, is GTD.

Gadkari wins popularity contest

It seems to be the season of giving in the dog-eat-dog world of politics, with compliments flying freely on Saturday. Political leaders were generous in their praise for Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari, during the foundation stone laying event and dedication of 33 national highway projects. JDS supremo and former PM HD Deve Gowda said Gadkari was always kind to him, and approved many projects he had suggested. Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge said when he was Opposition leader in the Lok Sabha, Gadkari would sometimes drop in at his office to ask if he had any new proposals. Union Minister Pralhad Joshi said BJP netted many votes during the last election because of Gadkari's good roads.

Congress needs to change tack

Senior Congress leaders seem to have an uncanny knack of damaging the party's prospects ahead of every election. In the run-up to the Sira and RR Nagar bypolls, they were publicly debating who would be the next chief ministerial candidate from the party. Seniors failed to put up a united front to change the party's losing streak, and boost the sagging morale among workers. Now, just days before the Gram Panchayat polls -- crucial for the Congress to retain its hold at the grassroots level -- seniors are debating "who back-stabbed whom" in the 2018 assembly polls. Former CM Siddaramaiah, who lost from home constituency Chamundeshwari by a big margin, blamed the JDS-BJP understanding and his own party leaders for the humiliation. The Congress, which needs to seriously introspect its poll perfor mance, also seriously needs a behavioural analyst and adviser.

Kateel's Pumpwell hangover

BJP state president and Dakshina Kannada MP Nalin Kumar Kateel seems to be finding it difficult to shake off the bitter experience of the Pumpwell flyover. Kateel was severely attacked by the Opposition and citizens as the flyover took more than a decade to be completed. Recently, while laying the foundation stone for Coastal Berth, a jetty for commercial cargo ships in Mangaluru which he claimed was pending for more than three decades, he said that people should ask (Congress) why it was delayed. "For one Pumpwell flyover, you criticised me so much. You should ask them why development did not take place when they were in power, and is happening now," he said, trying to chase away old ghosts.

An elderly man takes his cattle for grazing near Tungani in Kanakapura on Sunday. The villagers demand better medical facilities for their cattle and for them cow slaughter was not a priority | VINOD KUMAR T

WITH GP POLLS TOMORROW, THEY HOPE FOR BETTER INFRA

Villagers seek toilets, drinking water, decent shelter and better roads

Demand more employment opportuinites to prevent migration to cities

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @Ramanagara

AS half of the state is gearing up for the first phase of Gram Panchayat elections on Tuesday, a large number of candidates are falling back on the age-old formula of offering better basic amenities, like toilets, decent shelter, drinking water and good roads, to garner votes. Despite threats boycotting elections at some villages, voters are looking forward to the elections with hope.

TNIE visited a few villages in Ramanagara and Kanakapura districts to assess the mood on the ground. A small hamlet, Achhalu Doddi, has over 120 voters, who stay in thatched-roof huts. The villagers, who work as farm or construction labourers, want only their basic demands met -- like a house with a decent roof and a toilet. Open defecation is still practised today, putting their womenfolk in danger. Though they have been staying here for years, they don't have ownership of the land where their huts stand. Not just here, at many villagers in the surrounding, farm labourers don't own land of their residence. "We neither have money to buy land, nor have land to sell. All we live for is today," said Nanjaiah, a village farmhand.

> We neither have money to buy land, nor have land to sell. All we live for is today
>
> Nanjaiah, village resident

At Yarehalli in Kootagal Gram Panchayat in Kanakapura taluk, villagers have decided to boycott the elections as their demand for better road connectivity to their village has not been met. Asserting their threat, villagers have stuck pamphlets declaring the boycott on the walls of panchayat office and other buildings.

For other villagers the health of their cattle is priority. Ramachandra from Varegerehalli in Ramanagara, who has two cows and two calves, said, "Our life revolves around cattle. We need a better veterinary hospital."

Villagers also demand employment locally which stops them from migrating to cities. Chandregowda from Kallahalli said, "There is a complete mismatch between what the government figures show on MGNREGA and what happens on the ground. The government releases large amounts of money for these projects, but contractors deploy earthmovers and other machinery, robbing us of jobs and earning opportunities."

Some villagers welcomed the recent amendments to the APMC bill. Nagaraju from Kailancha Grama Panchayat, who grows paddy, said that he spends Rs 1,000 to transport his produce to Ramanagara APMC, and in addition pays Rs 500 each to two-three labourers to load and unload. But now with the APMC bill, they can sell from their own land. "Also, when I sell at APMC, I have to pay 10-20 per cent commission to middleman. All these costs will be saved," he added.

The new members of Ravoor Grama Panchayat, in Chittapur on Sunday

ALL 32 CANDIDATES AT RAVOOR WIN UNOPPOSED

RAMKRISHNA BADSESHI @Kalaburagi

ALL the 32 candidates from the Ravoor Gram Panchayat in Chittapur taluk have been elected unopposed. Chittapur Tahsildar Umakant Halli said that 56 candidates had filed nominations to contest 32 seats in seven villages falling under Ravoor Gram Panchayat limits. Saturday was the last day to withdraw nominations, and 24 candidates took their documents back allowing unanimous election, he added

Halle said that the polls are scheduled to be held for 410 seats of 132 Gram Panchayts in Chittapur taulk. Of these, 91 candidates have been elected unopposed, 302 candidates have withdrawn their nominations and 767 candidates are in fray. For 23 seats of Yagapur Gram Panchayat, 13 candidates have been elected and 17 are in the fray for the remaining 10 seats. For 20 seats at Halakatta Grama Panchayat, 11 candidates have been elected unopposed, while 18 are fighting it out for nine seats.

Leaders of villages coming under the Ravoor Gram Panchayat felicitated the elected members and thanked the 24 candidates who withdrew their nominations. They said unopposed election would help in the development of Gram Panchayat.

Apart from this, Kalyana Karnataka Region Development Board (KKRDB) Chairman Dattatreya Patil Revoor announced that the board will provide a special grant of Rs 1 crore to GPs where members are elected unopposed.

Candidates go big, spend lakhs to woo voters

SUNIL PATIL @Belagavi

THE first phase of Gram Panchayat elections will be held on December 22, and candidates are going the extra mile to ensure their victory.

Besides going door to door, the candidates have also resorted to digital campaigning. This election, 30-second clips of candidates with their photograph and background music are trending on WhatsApp and Facebook.

As candidates are also wooing voters with liquor and non-vegetarian food spending lakhs, old-timers recall that just a decade ago, puffed rice and tea would be big deal.

The candidates are burning cash as, unlike other elections, there is no expenditure limit set by the State Election Commission on these polls.

He sells 2 acres of land

The contest at Toranhalli village in Chikodi taluk is so intense that one of the two candidates in fray has sold two acres of his ten-acre property to raise Rs 20 lakh.

The cost is no limit here as the candidates are fighting for pride.

Tour packages to lure voters

Money, liquor and non-veg food are passe. At Avarolli village in Khanapur taluk, it is tour packages that could tip the scales. All the three candidates have sent voters on three-day tour to Ulavi, and it is said that the voters will arrive in the village on December 22 and go straight to vote.

11,256 candidates in fray for 3,808 seats

Of 477 Gram Panchayats in Belagavi, 259 with 4,259 seats are facing polls on Tuesday. Since 437 candidates have been elected unopposed, elections will be held for 3,808 seats for which 11,256 candidates are in the fray.

JDS support crucial for BJP in Council

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

IN the last few months, the JDS has softened its stance towards the BJP and extended support to the government in getting the Land Reforms Bill passed and the ruling party's efforts to oust the Council Chairman. Yediyurappa too adopted a soft approach towards leader of the regional party and had even come to their rescue when farmers' associations questioned the JDS over its stand on amendment to the Land Reforms Act. The opposition Congress has accused both the parties of having a tacit understanding.

Kumaraswamy said that in the run-up to the 2018 elections, the Congress had termed the JDS as BJP's B-team, but came to its doorstep after the polls and extended an invitation to form a coalition government with it. "We would not have formed the government with the Congress if we were to be BJP's B-team. There is no tacit understanding with the BJP as being alleged by the Congress. Only an issue-based understanding is possible," the JDS leader stressed.

Sources in the JDS said the former CM had discussed with senior party leaders on having issue-based understanding with the BJP. For the ruling party, support from the JDS is crucial in Legislative Council to get the bills passed and have its party member as Chairman of the House.

Meanwhile, speaking to mediapersons in Bengaluru on Sunday, senior BJP leader and former minister Aravind Limbavali said political polarisation is bound to happen in the state and the country as others will join the development-centric party.

'Gangamma's contest against feudal mindset'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

NOT surprisingly, many on social media wished that Gangamma loses, so she could cleanse the system of corruption.

Gangamma's husband Kalkere Srinivas, who has stood solidly behind her, told *The New Indian Express* that her contest is symbolic against the feudal mentality of certain people who had also tried to get themselves unanimously elected through auctioning of seats.

Interestingly, Srinivas himself has contested the Lok Sabha polls thrice as an Independent, despite losing his deposit.

Gangamma, who has passed Class 10, is mother to a boy and girl.

In the last gram panchayat polls, she had garnered 80 votes in Kalkere

EXPRESS READ

Siddu supporter Rajanna, JDS MLA flay Kumaraswamy

Tumakuru: Supporters of Opposition Leader Siddaramaiah seem to have joined hands to give a fitting response to former chief minister H D Kumaraswamy, who has criticised the Congress leader. Former MLA K N Rajanna and Gubbi MLA S R Srinivas from JDS, who held a joint press conference on Sunday, criticised Kumaraswamy. "We were in favour of transfer of power to BJP after HDK enjoyed the CM's post in his first term in 2008. But he did not keep his word," they said. Rajanna claimed that he helped BJP's G S Basavaraju win the 2019 LS polls. **ENS**

Pvt individuals to be booked for placing hundis in temples

Bengaluru: The commissioner of endowments department has ordered that temple authorities can file police complaints against those collecting donations at government-owned temples or religious melas. The circular was issued after the department received a number of complaints of individuals and private organisations misusing the money collected at fairs organised by department-owned temples. The circular specified that donations are allowed only in hundis identified by the department. **ENS**

Oppn urges govt to end Toyota Kirloskar strike

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

OPPOSITION Congress and JDS on Sunday urged the State Government to take steps to end a strike by the employees of Toyota Kirloskar plant in Bidadi, around 30 km from Bengaluru.

Taking to social media, former chief minister and JDS leader H D Kumaraswamy said that a solution does not appear to be in sight though the strike will complete two months.

"The differences between the workers and management, issues related to middle-level managers and the government's apathy may also be the reasons for such a situation. However, there is a dire need to put an end to the impasse in the interest of the state's industrial development," the former CM stated.

Kumaraswamy accused the company of pushing its workers onto the streets either by supporting the middle-managers or acting on flimsy allegations against the staffers.

"It is not proper for companies that thrive by utilising our land, water, air and infrastructure to behave in such a cruel manner with our own people," he said.

After a violent protest at the Wistron facility in Kolar, iPhone-maker and Apple acknowledged managerial lapses and said that steps would be taken to ensure the employees are treated with dignity, Kumaraswamy said and added that Toyota too should introspect after Apple's stand.

He said that the government has to intervene to resolve such issues to protect workers' interests and that strikes and protests would lead to investors losing their confidence.

In a letter to Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa, former CM Siddaramaiah said the government should take steps to resolve the issue at Toyota Kirloskar and other firms.

A majority of employees at Wistron, against whom cases were registered, were students. The government must take steps to protect workers' interests, Siddaramaiah added.

BRIGHT YOUNG MINDS

NGO takes books to ragpickers' kids, hopes to reduce dropouts

AJITH M S @Mysuru

TO children of ragpickers in Mysuru city, Chaitra's two-wheeler signalled that the magical world of books had arrived, and was of great help even during the lockdown. Chaitra is a coordinator, along with Mangala and Harish of the Buguri initiative of Hasiru Dala, an NGO engaged with over 200 children of ragpickers in the city. The initiative aims to prevent children from dropping out of school.

At a time when there is deep concern over dropouts, and the government now allowing partial reopening of schools, this initiative has shown how to keep students engaged, despite the limitations imposed by the pandemic. The library on wheels gives neighbourhood kids books to read, which they circulate on a weekly basis.

A member of the NGO Hasiru Dala teaches kids in Mysuru

Chaitra says they realised they had to step in after finding out that online classes started late in several government schools, and many children did not have access to smartphones.

"We found there were issues with mobiles. Whoever had access to phones, even basic phones, we started making conference calls. Our volunteers would call a group of students three times a week to tell them stories and explain to them. The response was good," she said.

They did not stop at this. For those without phones or internet connection, they took printouts of stories and added activities and questions to evaluate and engage them. "Through the book kit initiative, we distributed 20 Kannada and 20 English books," she said.

They are confident that this will bring down the dropout rate. "We did not demonise their parents' work as that would have made them feel inferior. We might not be able to prevent everyone from joining the trade, but those who are forced to join will at least be in skilled jobs in waste management plants," she said.

> *We kept alive their interest to learn, and encouraged them to aspire for more*
>
> **Chaitra, Hasiru Dala coordinator**

The CCB arrested a 25-year-old youth for cricket betting. The accused is Shashi Kumar, a resident of Ramanagara. Police were informed that the suspect was receiving bets through mobile phone, at a hotel near Kamakya Theatre on Saturday. The sleuths seized ₹2.50 lakh in cash

Cong looks at new strategies for Kerala assembly polls

Party feels rebel candidates spoilt its chances in local body elections

Kerala Congress leader PJ Joseph, IUML leader PK Kunhalikutty, KPCC president Mullappally Ramachandran and others met recently in Thiruvananthapuram | EXPRESS

ARUN M @ Kochi

SMARTING from the local body poll setback, the Congress has decided to adopt a new approach for the assembly elections, which are just five months away, even as it is unlikely to go in for a massive overhaul of the top leadership.

The party, sources said, will go for winnable candidates and discard group equations, taking lessons from the civic polls. Selection of candidates based on groups had triggered major headache for the party in the form of rebel candidates in many seats across the state.

Though top-level reshuffle is ruled out at this juncture, the sources said district Congress chiefs, who hold other positions, may be asked to step down. This means DCC presidents of Ernakulam, Palakkad and Wayanad, who are also holding the post of MLA or MP, will have to quit. Besides, insiders maintained that the party's Thiruvananthapuram and Kollam district chiefs may have to step down in the wake of poll setback.

The party feels that the rebel candidates have spoiled its chances in the local body polls and such a scenario would not happen in the upcoming assembly polls.

"In the central Travancore region, the Congress faced the rebel menace, which affected its victory. Besides, in several panchayats, Congress and Kerala Congress (Joseph) faction candidates fought each other and the CPM candidates had the role of mere spectators. This situation will not happen in the assembly elections," said KPCC vice-president Joseph Vazhakkan.

According to him, fresh faces will be fielded as candidates though there would not be a change at the top. "There is no clamour for changing the Opposition leader. Besides, senior leader Oommen Chandy has enough responsibilities in the party," Vazhakkan said.

However, the top leaders are worried over the decline of votes in minority-dominated regions, which were once considered UDF bastions. Some leaders are of the view that the alliance with the Jamat-e-Islami-backed Welfare Party spoiled the good relationship with other Muslim communities in northern districts. Also, the setback in Pathanmathitta, Idukki, Thrissur and Kottayam -- after the Kerala Congress Jose K Mani faction left the coalition -- should be addressed, feel the leaders.

They said steps will be taken to remove misconceptions, if any, that the minorities have regarding the UDF's stance on various issues.

An AICC leader, who requested anonymity, said the minorities have not distanced themselves from the Congress and the UDF. "The majority community voted with a vengeance against the CPM and LDF in the last Lok Sabha elections in the wake of the Sabarimala issue. Though the UDF faced no such voter angst, the CPM adopted a clever apolitical strategy in these polls. For example, in Chengannur municipality, the CPM candidates contested as independents in more than 20 seats. They have not fought this poll politically and this strategy will not work in the assembly polls," he said.

Senior Congress leader and former KPCC chief K Muraleedharan said a change in present leadership would not bring any achievement. "Congress requires collective discussions and collective leadership," he said.

According to the leaders, the KPCC meeting scheduled to be held on December 27 will devise more strategies.

A leader of a prominent constituent in the UDF said Congress rebel candidates contested in the seats offered to its smaller constituents such as RSP, Kerala Congress (Jacob) and CMP. "The Congress has not trusted these constituents. This has also affected the poll results," he said, requesting anonymity.

KEY STRATEGIES

- Fresh faces and second generation leaders will be fielded as candidates
- Ensure support of minorities, who traditionally vote for UDF and Congress
- Adequate consideration for UDF constituents, however, no one could grant upperhand than Congress, the main constituent
- Comprehensive changes in grass root level committees and will take into consideration their feelings
- Focus in exposing the anti-people policies of the LDF government in favour of the sentiments of the public despite by calling frequent media conferences

BEFORE THE BELLS CHIME

An artistan makes a crib for Infant Jesus ahead of Christmas in Vijayawada on Sunday | PRASANT MADUGULA

Harassed by youth, girl ends life

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Guntur

ALLEGED harassment by a youngster in the name of love drove a class X girl to suicide at Korrapadu village in Medikonduru mandal. The girl who consumed pesticide a week ago, died on Friday night. Later, a video of the girl revealing the harassment by the youngster, surfaced and based on it, her family lodged a complaint with Medikonduru police on Saturday night. The youngster was arrested on Sunday.

Police said the girl, a student of Zilla Parishad high school at Korrapadu, was being harassed by Varaprasad (19), who recently completed Intermediate, for the past six months. On December 11, while she was on her way to school, he allegedly threatened her of dire consequences if she failed to love him. On December 13, the girl consumed pesticide and she was admitted to a private hospital. Following deterioration of her condition after four days, she was shifted to the Government General Hospital in Guntur.

3 more held in ex-minister's kidnap case

V VELAYUDHAM @ Kolar

THE Kolar police, who cracked the sensational kidnap case of former MLA Varthur R Prakash with the arrest of prime accused Kaviraj a week ago, have now arrested three more persons and are on the lookout for a few others.

Speaking to *The New Indian Express*, Kolar Superintendent of Police Karthick Reddy said that a police team arrested Ullas Reddy, Likith and Manoj near Kodathi Gate, based on credible information. All three were produced before a court and taken into police custody for five days.

The Kolar team is co-ordinating with the neighbouring Andhra and Tamil Nadu police and in one or two days, the remaining accused persons will also be arrested, Reddy said.

CRIME PATROL

The SP said the prime accused Kaviraj has been taken to further six days of custody for interrogation. To a question on whether Kaviraj, who is allegedly an aide of arrested gangster Ravi Pujari, had acted on the latter's instructions, he said the team is investigating the angle and that the technical team is collecting all the mobile phone data.

> **A police team arrested Ullas Reddy, Likith and Manoj near Kodathi Gate, based on credible information. All three were produced before a court and taken into police custody for five days**
>
> Karthick Reddy, IGP Kolar

Varthur Prakash and his driver Suneel were severely injured after they were attacked by a gang of eight kidnappers who had demanded Rs 30 crore in ransom. Prakash approached Bellandur police on December 2, and, in his complaint, alleged that on November 25, he and his driver left their farmhouse in Begli Hosahalli, for Kolar in his SUV. Around 7pm, eight men had blocked his SUV and threatened them with lethal weapons. They tied his legs and hands and demanded Rs 30 crore and drove away his SUV, the complaint said.

Centre ready to talk, but farmers adamant: Athawale

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment **Ramdas Athawale** on Sunday said the Central government is not adamant on farm laws and is ready to again hold talks with farmers and consider changes suggested by them.

He told reporters in Bengaluru that several rounds of talks were held with representatives of farmers protesting in New Delhi, but they are stuck on one point – that the government withdraw the laws. Making it clear that the Centre would not withdraw the laws, he said that if the government does so, it will have to do the same with other laws passed by Parliament whenever there is a protest, and that will put democracy and the Constitution into jeopardy.

"The protest is taking a political turn," he said. When the government is ready to ensure that APMC yards and the MSP system are not disturbed, and is ready to consider their suggestions, it is not right for farmers to continue with the agitation, he said. He appealed to farmers to call off their protest. Claiming that PM Narendra Modi would not bring in laws against the interest of farmers, he said it is only farmers from Punjab, Haryana and some border areas of Uttar Pradesh who are taking part in the protest.

Welcoming Karnataka's move to form the Maratha Development Corporation, Athawale said CM BS Yediyurappa's work was appreciated as he takes people from all communities into confidence.

COVID SPIKE

Chennai records positive case growth rate

OMJASVIN M D @ Chennai

IN the wake of new Covid-19 clusters in Chennai's educational institutions, the city, for the first time since October end, is again recording a positive case growth. According to data from Chennai corporation, the city recorded a positive case growth of 0.5 per cent in the last seven days. This means, the number of new cases being reported have been higher than the number of people discharged. When the Covid-19 cases were at its peak around June this year, the city saw a case growth of eight per cent. However, subsequently, the case growth kept declining till the first week of December.

CRIME PATROL

Construction worker falls from 2nd floor, dies

Bengaluru: A construction labourer died after falling from the second floor of an under-construction building in Sanjaynagar on Saturday. The deceased is Raman Pramesh, a native of Bihar. Pramesh was working at the site owned by one Bhaskar, when he lost balance and fell from the second floor. His body was noticed by a supervisor, who alerted the police. Police have registered an FIR against Bhaskar and engineer Bharath, and charged them for negligence.

7 held for plotting bizman's murder

Bengaluru: The police have arrested a gang of seven for allegedly hatching a conspiracy to murder businessman Deepak Gowda, rowdy Cycle Ravi and his associate Bakery Raghu. The accused Manjunath and his associates allegedly tried to attack policemen when they tried to nab them. DCP (South) Harish Pandey said the police were tipped off that some suspicious people were sitting in a vehicle near National College on Sunday. "Upon seeing the cops, the suspects tried to run over the officers and also tried to attack them with a sword. However, the policemen waylaid the vehicle and nabbed them.

Airport police seize bullets from ex-MLA

Bengaluru: Former BJP MLA Manappa D Vajjal was held at Bengaluru airport recently for carrying 16 live bullets in his hand luggage, before boarding a flight to Hyderabad. Vajjal had a gun licence but did not seek permission to carry the bullets on board, said police. The Central Security Industrial Force (CISF) personnel seized the .32mm bullets at the security check carrying and he was not allowed to board his flight. He was handed over to the KIA police and was allowed to board another flight later in the day.

People gather at the spot where a 20-year-old youth died after ramming his bike into a parked tractor, in Basavanagudi on Saturday night | MEGHANA SASTRY

Costly triple ride: 4 killed in 2 accidents

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

Four youngsters were killed in two accidents, where they were riding triples, on Sunday. In both cases, the bikers were under the influence of alcohol.

In Basavanagudi, a 20-year-old biker was killed, while two of his friends escaped with minor injuries after their speeding sports bike collided with a tractor parked at Yadiyur Circle late on Saturday night. Reckless driving under the influence of alcohol led to the accident, the police said.

The deceased, Dheeraj M, was a resident of Jayanagar 8th Block, while the injured, Puneeth R (21) and Mahadeva Swamy (19), are residents of KP Agrahara.

Basavanagudi traffic police said the incident occurred at 12.15 am when Dheeraj was dropping his friends home after a party at Rajajinagar. Riding triples, Dheeraj tried to overtake a car, but lost control and crashed into the parked tractor and was killed on the spot. All the three were not wearing helmets, the police said.

Meanwhile, in Hoskote too, triple riding proved costly for three youth who had gone on a joyride on a scooter. Speeding, they crashed their vehicle into a truck that was parked near the Hoskote toll.

The deceased have been identified as Lavaneeth (23), a football coach; and Rajesh (24) and Harish (24), who were small-scale businessmen. The three were residents of Hoskote town. Even in this incident, they were allegedly not wearing helmets when the accident occurred.

The accident happened at 12.30 am on Sunday when they were returning home after allegedly consuming alcohol with some friends at a nearby forest. Rajesh, who was riding the scooter, lost control and rammed into the parked truck. All the three suffered severe head injuries and died on the spot. The truck driver called the toll staff, who in turn alerted the police.

WORK OF ART

'A Kiss for the Grandma', 17-year-old's ode to Arabian Sea

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Kasaragod

A young woman hugging her baby as her husband stands beside, his hand on her shoulder. Three men performing 'kolkali', a folk art indigenous to the northern region of Malabar, right behind the couple. With the aid of the performers, the mother is holding the child to her chest and telling her the tales of Bekal Fort, explains 17-year-old M C Chitraraj while pointing out at the 22-ft-high concrete sculpture he built from the scratch.

'A Kiss for the Grandma', Chitraraj calls his creation. "The granny, of course, is the Arabian Sea," said the polytechnic student, who had spent his holidays and weekends over the last two years on the Bekal Beach, perfecting the sculpture.

The art installation is part of the Bekal Resorts Development Corporation's (BRDC) plan to beautify the Bekal Beach. Udma MLA K Kunhiraman had inaugurated the work back on May 25, 2018, when Chitraraj was just 14 years old. The BRDC is also setting up a walkway called the Art Walk, which will comprise installations of paintings made by children and artists.

Chitraraj, who was selected from a statewide contest to make the installation, started making sculptures at the age of 11. He is a student of his father M V Raveendran, who is the chief artist at the Kannur Medical College Hospital, Pariyaram.

MC Chitraraj, with the help of his friends, builds the 22-ft-high concrete sculpture | EXPRESS

His mother Usha Raveendran is working at the Karunya Pharmacy in the same hospital.

In 2018, Chitraraj was invited by the Union Ministry of Culture to represent the state in the National Cultural Festival, said a proud Raveendran. By now, the youngster has exhibited his work at several art galleries, including the Kerala Lalithakala Akademi.

To make 'A Kiss for the Grandma', he practised by creating six-foot concrete sculptures at his house. "I made several life-size structures before starting the work on the beach," he said. Ashish Thamban, Lakshmi Sudha, Aparna Vijayan, Manjima Mani, Abhinav Lal, and Govardhan – who are his friends and fellow students of his father – helped him complete the five sculptures, he added.

A similar concrete artwork called 'The Sorrowful Mother', conceived in 2008 and executed by renowned sculpture Kanayi Kunhiraman, 82, had been abandoned midway. The sculpture, which was a memorial to the victims of the endosulfan tragedy, has now been run over by wild bushes in front of the district panchayat office.

> **I made several life-size structures before starting the work on the beach. My friends Ashish Thamban, Lakshmi Sudha, Aparna Vijayan, Manjima Mani, Abhinav Lal, and Govardhan helped me with the project**
>
> MC Chitraraj, sculptor

EDITORIAL

"At stake in most Arab countries are a set of still-unresolved questions of identity, of how society is ordered, and how people live their lives. This, unfortunately, is the stuff of raw, existential battles

Shadi Hamid

INDIAN EXPRESS IS NOT AN INDUSTRY. IT IS A MISSION.

— Ramnath Goenka

TAKEAWAYS FROM APEX COURT ORDER ON AFFORDABLE COVID CARE

The Supreme Court's recent order labelling affordable Covid care a fundamental right is welcome at many levels, though it comes at a time when there is little evidence of the infection's feared winter wave. In fact, the last million fresh cases came in 29 days as compared to just 11 days during the Covid peak. The Bench's order would hopefully rationalise the cost of testing and treatment at private facilities and ensure dignity in the handling of patients and bodies. Had it intervened emphatically—as it did on the interest on interest question—during the initial lockdown when many migrant labourers trudged home for hundreds of kilometres without food or shelter due to lack of transport, it would have had a sobering effect on the administration. Anyway, better late than never. A lot has happened ever since. The government has understood the futility of total lockdowns; won a state election without migration taking its toll; people splurged big time during the festival season despite financial stress; and the economy is picking up after plunging to record depths. The focus now is on mass vaccination with the most vulnerable sections getting the first opportunity to take the jab.

As the court pointed out, the spike in cases happened as people largely failed to observe Covid protocols. That Gujarat alone collected ₹80-90 crore as penalty from those flouting pandemic norms indicates the gravity of the problem. Conventional wisdom suggests that the mass build-up of protesting farmers at Delhi's gates for over three weeks could snowball into a Covid cluster, though there is no indication of it yet. And participants of Amit Shah's massive rally in West Bengal on Saturday didn't seem conscious of the need for Covid discipline.

The SC order endorsed poll-time Covid guidelines issued by the EC and the latter patted itself on its back after the successful Bihar polls. But the fact remains that the poll body did precious little to police campaigning in Bihar where wearing masks and personal distancing were completely ignored. India must consider itself fortunate that the indiscipline did not turn Bihar into a Covid bomb. Had the SC made officials accountable for enforcing the EC's pandemic norms, anxiety around subsequent elections would have significantly diminished.

ANDHRA PRADESH'S CAPITAL IMBROGLIO

Does Andhra Pradesh have a capital? With the sword of Damocles hanging over the yet-to-be-built Amaravati as also the three-capital decision of the Jagan government, at the moment, the state doesn't appear to have one in the strictest sense of the term. The government's move to have the executive capital in Vizag, legislative capital in Amaravati and judicial one in Kurnool may be subject to the outcome of a plethora of court cases filed by dozens, including farmers who have surrendered lands in hopes of reaping a windfall once Amaravati takes shape. Nonetheless, it is keen on pressing ahead and it is amply clear that it has no intention of building a capital city as envisioned by TDP chief and former chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu.

Against this backdrop, Naidu has dared the government to call for a referendum on the capital issue and vowed to quit politics if the latter has its way. His dare, coming on the occasion of the first anniversary of the so-called Amaravati agitation, may not be taken seriously but in it is an implicit admission that the capital, wherever it is and in whatever form, must be acceptable to all. Going by the little support it has garnered over the last one year, it is obvious that few outside the region care about Amaravati. The reasons for this are varied, be it the historical aspirations of the much-neglected Rayalaseema and North Andhra, the fragile finances of the state, or the perception of economic domination by one particular caste grouping, whether real or imaginary. But does all this mean Jagan's three capitals plan has traction? Yes, it is a fact that the Assembly approved the relevant bills. But so did the previous Assembly in the case of Amaravati.

If the government is to move forward, it needs to convince the people that its plan is practicable, which it is compared to Amaravati. At the same time, it must come up with a clear roadmap to compensate Amaravati farmers who have been promised the moon by the previous TDP regime based purely on real estate speculation. For these twin purposes, it requires statesmanship, not political rhetoric.

The Arab-Israeli conflict is giving way to the sectarian one between Iran and Saudi. And there is the more energetic involvement of Turkey in the affairs of the Islamic world

ISLAMIC WORLD IN CHURN, OUTCOME WILL DICTATE FUTURE GEOPOLITICS

AMIT BANDRE

LT GEN SYED ATA HASNAIN (RETD)

Former Commander, Srinagar-based 15 Corps. Now Chancellor, Central University of Kashmir

Many do not agree with the 'clash of civilisations' theory of Samuel P Huntington but there can hardly be a doubt about the fact that there has been a churn within the Islamic world since 1979. The defeat of the former Soviet Union in Afghanistan at the hands of the US-Saudi-Pakistan combine through 1979-89 contributed to the end of the Cold War. The revolution in Iran in 1979 also had a profound telling effect within the faith. The events that followed after 1989 began an unspecified and hard-to-peg vision of the Islamic world: on the one hand, reformation in the faith and potential steps towards modernisation, and on the other, obscurantism or a return to the origins of the faith. A competition to lead the faith and take the Ummah to a position of dominance in international power politics was also triggered.

The combination of these trends is what the churn has been all about—an internal process of conflicts between numerous sects and subsects and between Islamic nations. However, when these trends mire into geopolitical issues, they create far greater turbulence. Palestine-Israel, Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, Libya and Syria have been just a few. The progressive emergence and persistent presence of non-state actors such as Al Qaeda, Islamic State, Al Shabab and Boko Haram have added a different dimension. Arab nations, more specifically those of the Gulf Cooperation Council, financially dominated the Islamic world. Saudi Arabia has led the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the 57-nation club of Islamic nations that addresses many of their affairs but without great unity and even lesser vision.

In the last two years and more, specifically after the onset of the Covid pandemic, the churn within the Islamic bloc appears to be changing course. It will take several analyses to specify the effect this is likely to have on different important nations and regions, as also the geopolitics involved there. However, the most critical part is to ascertain how these changes are occurring, thereby creating a new strategic environment that will enable fresh alignments or reinforce existing conflicts.

The prime area of change is the Middle East that is in much less turmoil and undergoing a process of transition. The Arab-Israeli conflict, which dominated Middle East geopolitics for many years, is giving way to the emerging sectarian conflict between Iran and Saudi Arabia. The Saudis have changed tack and are in the process of making peace with Israel, although formalisation is awaited. Israel is no longer outcast to a segment of the Middle East nations. The recent flurry of Abraham Accords appears to set the tone for many more nations to normalise relations with Israel, facilitated by the US. Nations such as Syria and even Lebanon may not follow suit but the potential for stability will increase if discord with Israel reduces. In the same light, Qatar's de-isolation is in process under US nudging; this too will contribute towards stability.

The energy-related significance of the Middle East has been only partially reduced with the US no longer dependent on the region. China, Japan and India continue to remain so for their future economic growth. The US is looking to shift focus to the Indo-Pacific but its continued presence in the Middle East will also ensure some control over resources and events at the strategic confluence of the world. The Islamic world's energy-linked significance, which rose in 1973, could remain intact for some more time.

Terror has been on the blink ever since the defeat of the Islamic State. The potential for resurgence always remains due to the existence of proxies of Iran and core elements of the non-state terror groups. The sectarian conflict cannot be won on any conventional battlefield. It will be a fight that will exploit every facet of hybrid war with irregular strikes against assets, population and leadership—prime potential for high turbulence. The end of Israel's outcast status may somewhat contribute towards neatening the lines of conflict after the complexities witnessed during the Syrian civil war, when it was difficult to determine who was in conflict with whom.

Dynamic changes by key players will be frequent as lines remain blurred and loyalties are still for sale. Pakistan, for instance, sits on the fence of whether to go with Turkey and Iran or return to the traditional Saudi club

Yet, whatever is achieved, there is further setback due to the more energetic involvement of Turkey in the affairs of the Islamic world and the Middle East in particular after a clear fallout with Europe; Mustafa Kemal's dream lies shattered and with that has arisen Turkey's Ottoman ambition. Ostensibly, Turkey is with Iran and Pakistan in an attempt to challenge Arab and specifically Saudi hegemony of the OIC. Yet, Turkey, after assisting in Azerbaijan's victory over Armenia in the recent war over Nagorno-Karabakh, is now giving indicators of hardening its stance against Iran and attempting to show a softer approach towards Israel and Saudi Arabia. It is probably setting the stage to welcome the new US administration in the hope of having sanctions imposed by the Trump administration lifted. Such dynamic changes by key players in the Islamic world will be a frequent phenomenon as lines yet remain blurred and loyalties are still for sale. Pakistan, for instance, sits on the fence of whether to go with Turkey and Iran or return to the traditional Saudi club. Contending with US-Saudi soft pedalling on Kashmir will be a difficult decision but its economic plight gives it few options. The Af-Pak area will continue to attract attention due to conflicts that Pakistan is involved in, on both its flanks.

One area that remains in contention is the ideological nerve centre of the future. Will Saudi Arabia's high position as the custodian of the holy shrines be challenged? Although Islam is linked to the Saudi territories and the Arabic language that spell the emotions of the faith, a contestation for leadership could yet occur.

A few random issues at stake will be whether an Arab Spring 2.0 will occur anytime in the near future, how Iran handles conflicts around it, whether the non-state terror groups attempt a major resurgence, how successful efforts to reduce Islamophobia are, and finally how Europe responds to immigrant communities. On the final manifestation from the churn of these trends will the Islamic world contend with future international geopolitics. Expect to hear more on this from my keyboard.

(atahasnain@gmail.com)

HOW TO PROFESSIONALISE FAMILY-MANAGED BUSINESSES

ASHOKE K MAITRA

Senior HR Adviser to Industries

Family-managed businesses constitute 70% of the total Indian industries and contribute to 79% of the national GDP. India has 108 public-listed family-managed businesses, making it the third highest in the world.

Global research demonstrates that most businesses start with an entrepreneur who is passionate about a sector. The person takes a lot of risk and works very hard to make it grow.

We are all aware of the contribution of Jamshedji Tata, G D Birla and others who started many companies. Internationally, Ford Motors, Honda, Yamaha, Toyota and many others also started as family-managed businesses, but they professionalised the management to make it a sustainable company.

Research also shows that family-managed businesses contribute to 87% of the world's economy. If they do not professionalise the management by the third generation, the company inevitably withers away.

Many family-managed companies such as the Tata group, Mahindra group, etc., have professionalised and become sustainable companies. However, companies that did not professionalise withered away. We all remember the Modi group, Dalmia group, Kilachand Industries and Mafatlal group, which at one time were great conglomerates. Today, the Tata group has a Group Chairman who is an executive not from the Tata family. Yet, many family owners refuse to professionalise.

The question therefore arises about how to professionalise the company. I have been actively involved in professionalising different companies and based on my research and experience, I am listing down the steps in professionalisation of the management.

The first step is to do a diagnostic study using a SWOT analysis to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities for growth and threats that can derail the company. This has to be done in terms of business strategy, shared values, style of leadership, systems and policies, staffing (both numbers and quality) and skill sets available.

Based on this diagnostic study, an action plan is made to further build on the strengths and remove the weaknesses found in the above areas to make the company grow with clear milestones and evaluation parameters.

While embarking on a scientific journey to professionalise the management for future sustainability, we also need to be sensitive to the complex growth-oriented issues faced by the entrepreneurs.

For example, when an entrepreneur starts a company, it is very difficult for them to hire the highest quality people. The entrepreneur looks for hard work, great implementation capacity and loyalty. In most cases, when the company reaches ₹600-₹1,000 crore turnover, the entrepreneur realises that those who have contributed to the growth of the company may not have the capacity to take it to the next orbit and double or triple the turnover.

Family-managed businesses contribute 87% of the world's economy. If they do not professionalise the management by the third generation, the company inevitably withers away. Yet, many family owners refuse to do so

It is a very painful realisation and equally painful for him/her to replace them with better talent. The entrepreneur realises that if they are not replaced, the company will not grow, but at the same time, he/she is also acutely aware of the fact that these very people have been loyal and made the firm grow, and are dependent on them. At many times, the promoter may have treated the employees who joined during the start-up phase as part of his/her family.

I remember a promoter of a pharmaceutical company telling me that the four vice presidents who had contributed to the growth of the company were now not allowing new talent to grow as they were scared the new entrant may replace them.

He said, "Every time I have got very bright talent under the VPs, they have seen to it that these professionals were made to fail. What do I do?" He was frustrated and agonised. Yet, it was difficult for him to tell them to exit.

Secondly, many entrepreneurs may painfully realise that the strategy that made them grow is not yielding results anymore, as the market forces have changed. They need to build a new strategy, but that also means a lot of investment on technology, people, etc.

Research demonstrates that almost all companies that have grown have made significant investments in technology, processes and people. Hence, an important step is to acknowledge the reality and create a vision, business strategy and make investment plans to induct technology to put the company on a growth trajectory.

The third step is to create human resource policies, SOPs and systems so that the company can work as per policies like multinational companies do and not based on the whims and fancies of the owner or top management.

The fourth step is to benchmark the salaries in the market and peg the compensation to the 75th percentile so that the best talents stay with the company.

The fifth step is to create a culture of meritocracy by having a very effective performance evaluation system to measure the contribution scientifically and accurately and then give rewards and recognition based on that.

The sixth step is build capability in the existing people through protracted training. Training should be seen as an investment and not expenditure.

There are many more steps, but these six steps are the curtain raisers towards professionalisation and will herald a great future.

(ashoke.maitra@gmail.com)

MAILBAG

WRITE TO: letters@newindianexpress.com

Credit to Aussie pacers

It was a humiliating defeat for Team India in the first test at Adelaide. After taking a lead in the first innings, the team was bundled out for just 36 runs in the second, the lowest-ever score in Indian Test cricket history. The credit for the Australian win should go to pace bowlers Josh Hazelwood and Pat Cummins for their brilliant performance in the second innings.

N A Joseph, Ettumanoor

The hype around cricket

India's ignominious defeat in the Adelaide Test on Saturday is not the end of sports in India. Cricket is not the only game in the country. It is time that the hype around cricket came to an end so that other sports can also blossom in our nation.

C G Kuriakose, Kothamangalam

Hat-trick of overseas losses

Every cricket lover in India would love to forget the team's batting performance. The defeat completes a hat-trick of losses overseas. The cricket-loving people of India expect the financially well-off BCCI to prepare more bowler-friendly wickets at the domestic level.

V Nagendra Kumar, Hyderabad

A fifth columnist

As the author points out, the ambition of Asaduddin Owaisi to become the next Shahenshah of Hindustan will remain a mirage *(Metro-Nizam who wants to be national Mughal,* Dec 20). If somebody alleges he is a BJP fifth columnist, nobody can blame them. Even though Owaisi claims to be a messiah for Dalits as well, even the meaning of his party's name doesn't substantiate it.

Dr M Haneef, Kottayam

Not wrong to take on BJP

I don't like people calling Indian Muslims by referring to any dynasty, especially the Mughals, as they have no direct connection whatsoever. And what if Owaisi wants to be a Caliph of Indian Muslims as long he abides by the Constitution; it isn't a bad thing to stand against a biased government that has a soft corner for one community. Finally, the article talks about the history of the AIMIM; no doubt it is right, but don't forget that once the RSS was banned over suspicion of involvement in Gandhi's assassination.

Abid Husen Donur, email

Masquerading as secular

The author has brilliantly profiled the Muslim fundamentalist and AIMIM leader. He is masquerading across many states as secular only for the sake of votes.

Geetha B K, Mangaluru

Cong plight worrisome

This is with reference to the article *Decline & fall of the Congress. Again* (Dec 20). The plight of the Congress is worrisome. The much-hyped Gandhi effect has failed to resurrect the party. It's unfortunate that the central leadership pays no attention to the request of even senior members for a leadership change.

Bijumon P N, Idukki

Spend more on healthcare

In the article *Healthcare: Chasing the dangerous unreality* (Dec 17), the writer has pointed out what ails our current system. The writer has questioned why an enhanced healthcare budget is not possible when the Centre could waive off ₹1.5 lakh crore for corporates. This is pertinent.

K Jayanthi, Chennai

Every vote matters

Many people say that their vote doesn't matter and wouldn't make a difference. They should look at the recent Kerala local body elections where Congress mayoral candidate N Venugopal lost by just one vote in Kochi.

Yashi Bairagi, Chennai

This is a new India

This is with reference to *Stop lecturing India about democracy* (Dec 15). The Western countries with a population of 50 lakh to at best a few crore people feel emboldened to criticise India because of their economic prosperity. It's high time these nations are made to realise that India has come a long way from the 1950s, 60s and 70s and is among the top six countries in terms of GDP.

N Ramakrishnan, email

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TWEETS OF THE DAY

Shashi Tharoor @ShashiTharoor
Protesting farmers in Delhi have started a new@ YouTube channel called Kisan Ekta Morcha. Please subscribe, share & like.

Narendra Singh Tomar @nstomar
Representatives of 'Hind Mazdoor Kisan Samiti' from Meerut gave memorandum in support of new agrarian reform bills and PM Modi

Yogendra Yadav @_YogendraYadav
In midst of a Facebook Live I was doing from Kisan Ekta Morcha's page, we get a notification that the FB page has been unpublished.

Parl panel scrutiny could have averted deadlock on farm laws

Experts feel discussions with stakeholders in agriculture would have improved the Bills

SQUEEZING ROLE OF STANDING COMMITTEES

17th Lok Sabha of the Bills introduced were referred to committees

16th Lok Sabha of the Bills introduced were referred to committees

15th Lok Sabha of the Bills introduced were referred to committees

14th Lok Sabha of the Bills introduced were referred to committees

LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS

Year	No. of Bills passed in Parliament
2009	41
2010	43
2011	36
2012	32
2013	29
2014	38
2015	36
2016	43
2017	44
2018	33
2019	49
2020	38

KUMAR VIKRAM @ New Delhi

WHILE farmers have been agitating for over a month objecting to some key provisions of the new agri laws, one of the main grouses of political parties is about the Modi government riding roughshod over the parliamentary procedures.

When the opposition parties had complained to President Ram Nath Kovind back in September over the government disregarding their view that the farm Bills should be sent to either a parliamentary select committee or a standing committee, it was only underlining the NDA dispensation's increasing reluctance to bypass such committees to scrutinise crucial Bills.

Parliament data shows the criticism is not unjustified. While both Houses — Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha — have done record business and passed a large number of Bills under the NDA government, far lesser number of legislations have been sent to standing committees for scrutiny before being enacted.

In the 16th Lok Sabha (2014-19), only 25% of the Bills introduced were referred to the parliamentary committees, much lower than the 71% and 60% in the 15th and 14th Lok Sabhas, respectively.

The percentage is even lower in the current Lok Sabha, with only about 10% of Bills tabled having been referred to committees, as per the data from the House.

Opposition parties and experts have contended that had the farm Bills been sent for the standing committee's scrutiny, the farmers' agitation could have been avoided.

"Unfortunately, the government neither sent this Bill to a select committee nor a standing committee. Had this been done, this would have been a very good Bill and would have benefited the farmers," Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad had said when he, along with other Opposition leaders, had met the President on September 23 requesting him not to sign the Bills.

The farm Bills are not the only ones that skipped a parliamentary committee's scrutiny in the 17th Lok Sabha. While 28 Bills were passed during the Budget session last year, no new Bill was referred to any committee. In the 16th Lok Sabha, 133 Bills were passed, but only 24 were sent to parliamentary committees. In contrast, of the 165 Bills passed in the 15th Lok Sabha, 68 were sent to committees.

Former LS secretary general PDT Achary is of the view that important Bills must be sent to these committees. "Most of the important Bills should be referred to the committees. That's why these committees were formed," he said.

"Had the farm Bills been referred to the committee (on agriculture), it would have called all the stakeholders and taken their views, would have held discussions with agriculture scientists and experts and on the basis of all the discussions, would have made its recommendations to improve the Bill," Achary said.

"Our experience is that once a Bill goes to a committee, it comes back in a much better form, so you have a better law than what was originally tabled," he added.

Constitution expert Subhash Kashyap has similar views. "The intention of setting up a subject related or department related committee is that all Bills will be sent. The whole idea was to develop some ministry-wise specialisation in legislature and to send, so far as possible, all the Bills for scrutiny to these committees. But only a few are being sent. That is not correct in my opinion," he said.

The system of department related standing committees was instituted by Parliament in 1993. There are 24 such committees.

Kashyap said the idea was to have in-depth examination of provisions of the Bills so that enacting hasty or flawed legislations could be avoided or the shortcomings of a Bill removed. "It is for the government and Parliament to consider why more Bills are not being set to the committees."

SYSTEM THAT HAS STOOD TEST OF TIME

The system of department related standing committees was instituted by Parliament in 1993. Currently, there are 24 such committees such as those on finance, home affairs, defence etc. These standing committees examine Bills that are referred to them. They also examine the expenditure plans of ministries in the Union Budget. In addition, they may examine the working of the departments and schemes of the government.

(Clockwise from top left) Uttarakhand's ex CM Harish Rawat (centre) joins the protest at Ghazipur on Sunday; farmers pay tributes to those who died in the ongoing agitation; a Nihang keeps an eye on the crowds on highway | PARVEEN NEGI

FB, Insta pages blocked: Morcha

NEW DELHI: The Facebook and Instagram accounts being used on farm agitations were blocked on Sunday following a live broadcast, claimed managers of Kisan Ekta Morcha. They said Facebook blocked their access saying it had gone against its community standards on spam. The page on Instagram, which is also owned by Facebook, has faced similar action.

Farmer ends life in Punjab

CHANDIGARH: A 22-year-old farmer, who returned from the protest near the Delhi border, on Sunday allegedly committed suicide after consuming some poisonous substance in Punjab's Bathinda district. Gurlabh Singh, a resident of Dayalpura Mirza village, had returned to his village late Saturday from the protest site. He was taken to the nearby hospital where he was declared dead.

'Why PM quiet on farm deaths?'

NEW DELHI: The Congress questioned PM Narendra Modi's "silence" on the death of farmers amid the sit-in since November 26. "Why hasn't Modi uttered a single word? Why is our PM 'maun' (silent)? Our 'annadatas' (food providers) are sitting out in one of the coldest winters in Delhi, but our Home Minister has no time for them but has time to go to Bengal," it said.

PM visits Delhi's iconic gurdwara, pays tributes to Guru Teg Bahadur

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday made a visit to Delhi's iconic Gurdwara Rakabganj to pay tributes to Guru Teg Bahadur.

The visit comes at a time when thousands of farmers from Sikh community from Punjab and Haryana are protesting against the three farm bills on the border of Delhi.

Guru Teg Bahadur's martyrdom is remembered every year as Martyr's Day. On Saturday, the whole country observed Guru Teg Bahadur's Martyrdom Day. Guru Teg Bahadur preached Sikhism during the 17th century.

No special arrangements were made or traffic barriers were put in place to restrict people's movement for the visit. Soon after the visit, Modi tweeted, "This morning, I prayed at the historic Gurdwara Rakab Ganj Sahib, where the pious body of Sri Guru Teg Bahadur Ji was cremated. I felt extremely blessed. I, like millions around the world, am deeply inspired by the kindnesses of Sri Guru Teg Bahadur Ji."

PM Modi offers prayers at Gurdwara Rakabganj Sahib | PM'S TWITTER HANDLE

"It is the special Kripa of the Guru Sahibs that we will mark the special occasion of the 400th Parkash Parv of Sri Guru Teg Bahadur Ji during our Government's tenure," Modi tweeted. "Let us mark this blessed occasion in a historic way and celebrate the ideals of Sri Guru Teg Bahadur Ji."

While people of the Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee were surprised to see Modi present in the premises, the BJP leaders say that the PM's visit is a matter of pure faith and should not be seen from any other perspective.

'Why are you barring help to Bengal tillers?'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

HITTING out at Mamata for supporting farmers stir, Shah said, "You are barring the Centre's financial aid for farmers in Bengal. When I need is just your consent with your signature. Send me is as if you are inviting me on the occasion of your nephew's birthday."

On Saturday, Shah arrived at Bolpur from Kolkata and visited the prayer room and Sangeet Bhaban (music department) of Visva Bharati University and paid tribute to Rabindranath Tagore. He held a meeting with the university authorities at Bangladesh Bhavan.

Before joining the roadshow, Shah and other BJP functionaries had lunch at the house of a local folk singer. "He paid tribute to Swami Vivekananda and martyr Khudiram Bose and today he paid his tribute to Rabindranath Tagore. All of them are icons for the Bengalis," said a BJP leader.

Condemning the attack on BJP's national president JP Nadda's convoy, Shah said it was an attack on democracy. "The reaction of the ruling party was a reflection in favour of the attack," he alleged.

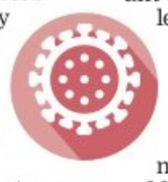
Covid emergency meet today on new strain

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

THE Union Health Ministry's Joint Monitoring Group will sit for an urgent meeting on Monday to discuss the emergence of a mutated variant of the coronavirus in the UK.

A number of European countries have banned flights from the UK as the British government warned that the potent new strain of the virus was "out of control" and imposed a stringent new stay-at-home lockdown from Sunday.

"The meeting chaired by the Director General of Health Services (DGHS) will hold a meeting on Monday morning to discuss the issue of the mutated variant of the coronavirus reported from the UK," a news agency reported.



WHO's India representative Dr Roderico H Ofrin, who is also a member of the Joint Monitoring Group, is likely to participate in the meeting

A surge in the infection rate caused by the new variant of the coronavirus has led to millions entering a stringent new stay-at-home lockdown in the UK from Sunday, with non-essential shops and businesses now closed.

Meanwhile, India's Covid caseload rose to 1,00,31,223 with 26,624 new infections being reported, while the number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 95.80 lakh pushing the recovery rate to 95.51 per cent, according to the Union Health Ministry data.

The toll increased to'1,45,477 with 341 new fatalities, the data updated at 8 am showed.

The Covid active caseload remained below 4 lakh for the 14th consecutive day. There are 3,05 lakh active infections in the country, the data stated. *Agency inputs*

Defence, energy to figure in India-Vietnam virtual meet

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

INDIA and Vietnam are likely to sign agreements in the areas of defence, energy, development partnership and healthcare in a virtual summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Vietnamese counterpart Nguyen Xuan Phuc on Monday.

The two leaders are expected to exchange their views on a wide range of bilateral, regional and global issues and chart out the course for the development of India-Vietnam Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in addition to charting out a joint vision for the same. Talks of new opportunities in renewable energy cooperation will also be on agenda.

The implementation of India's defence line of credit for high speed guard boats for Vietnam will also be discussed during the summit. "The two leaders will also take stock of the regional and global landscape in the context of the Covid pandemic, and exchange views on their strategies to deal with the pandemic, and the post-pandemic economic revival," said MEA sources.

EXPRESS READ

CBSE exams schedule likely on Dec 22

New Delhi: The schedule of Central Board of Secondary Education exams for Classes 10 and 12 proposed to be held next year through the paper-pen mode is likely to be announced on Tuesday. Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank, who will interact with teachers across the country on Tuesday, is expected to make the important announcement regarding the examination dates. CBSE officials have clarified that there is no proposal to hold the Board exams online.

Mumbai Cong chief for going solo in BMC polls

Mumbai: Newly-elected Mumbai Congress chief Ashok Jagtap suggested that the party contest all the 227 seats in the crucial 2022 elections to the Mumbai civic body. The Congress shares power with the Shiv Sena and the NCP in Maharashtra. "Seat-sharing is a difficult task, therefore, we as a party should think about the people who carried the party flag on their shoulders and fight all the 227 seats in the BMC elections," Jagtap told reporters in Jejuri in Pune district.

LoC FIRING

Indian soldiers did not attack UN vehicle: MEA

NEW YORK: Pakistan's allegations that Indian troops deliberately targeted a vehicle of the United Nations along the Line of Control were investigated in detail and found to be factually "incorrect and false", India said on Sunday.

Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said Pakistan should responsibly investigate its "lapses" instead of repeating "baseless and fabricated" allegations against India to cover up its own "failure" in ensuring the safety and security of UN personnel in territory under its control.

Pakistan on Friday alleged that Indian troops targeted a vehicle of United Nations Military Observers (UNMO) in the Chirikot sector along the LoC. Indian government sources rejected the allegations that day itself.

In response to media queries on allegations by Pakistan, Srivastava also said that India has conveyed its findings and views on "these misrepresentations" to the Pakistani side.

"Allegations by Pakistan regarding Indian forces deliberately targeting a UN vehicle on 18 Dec have been investigated in detail and found to be factually incorrect and false. Our forward troops were aware of the visit of UN Military Observers in the area and did not conduct any firing as alleged," he said.

Allegations by Pakistan regarding Indian forces deliberately targeting a UN vehicle on 18 Dec have been investigated in detail and found to be factually incorrect and false

MEA

"Instead of repeating baseless and fabricated allegations against India to cover up its own failure in ensuring the safety and security of UN personnel in territory under its control, Pakistan should responsibly investigate its lapses," the MEA spokesperson said.

In Islamabad, Pakistan summoned a senior Indian diplomat to register its protest over the alleged ceasefire violations by the Indian forces along the LoC .The Pakistan Foreign Office alleged that a civilian sustained injuries due to the firing in Rakhchikri Sector. *PTI*

INAUGURATION

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will deliver the inaugural address at the India International Science Festival (IISF) on Tuesday via video conferencing, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said on Sunday.

2 MP — COPS ARRESTED FOR ALLEGED EXTORTION

Ahmedabad	28	12	Mumbai	32	20
Bhopal	34	18	Panaji	32	25
Jaipur	25	11	Patna	34	25
Amritsar	19	05	Lucknow	21	08
Chennai	37	26	Port Blair	29	25
Kolkata	33	26	Imphal	31	20
Srinagar	07	-1	Chandigarh	20	07

'Affair' not linked to crime: CBI charge sheet

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has also deliberated at length over the alleged 'love affair' between the victim and the main accused, Sandeep, on the basis of their call detail record (CDR) and the witnesses in the village. The charge sheet says Sandeep was the victim's neighbour. Their acquaintance developed into a love affair and they used to often meet at isolated places. However, it has not linked it in any way with the crime.

'Police lapses resulted in loss of evidence in Hathras'

Charge sheet says cops did not record victim's statement properly

NAMITA BAJPAI @ Lucknow

THE charge sheet filed by the CBI in the rape and murder of a 20-year-old Dalit girl in September in Boolgarhi village of Hathras district in Uttar Pradesh has brought out a number of lapses and negligence on part of the district police in handling the case.

The central probe agency has contradicted the police claim that the initial FIR lodged by the victim's brother had talked only about physical assault and not rape.

The charge sheet, filed on December 18, further says that the four accused failed to give convincing alibis that they were not present at the scene of crime at the time of the incident.

Contrary to the claims of Chandpa police station officers that the FIR filed by the victim's brother, Satendra Kumar, only talked about the physical assault of the girl by one Sandeep of the same village, the CBI has contended that the victim herself had complained of rape.

During investigation, when a video clip of the victim at the police station was minutely analysed, she was heard uttering the word 'zabardasti' (rape/molestation) done with her by Sandeep, who she claimed tried to strangulate her with her 'dupatta'. As per agency sources, the video was shot by constable Omveer Singh when the victim was lying on a cemented platform at the police station in a critical condition, with her mother by her side.

The CBI has further mentioned that the Chandpa police station officials failed to comply with the mandate of Section 154 Criminal Procedure Code. They did not act promptly when Satendra approached them initially along with the bruised and battered victim, neither recording her statement nor sending her for medical examination, due to which incriminatory and valuable forensic evidence couldn't be collected and saved.

It was only on September 22, when she openly mentioned rape in her statement at Aligarh hospital naming the four accused that she was sent for medical examination, the CBI has said. It has also underlined that no woman officer was made investigating officer in the case.

Even though the central forensic lab reports on phones calls, laptop data and CCTV footages are yet to land, the CBI has taken a number of factors into consideration to invoke rape and murder charges against the accused — Sandeep, Ravi, Luvkush and Ramu alias Ramkumar.

The CBI says in the absence of physical evidence and forensic samples collected from the victim's body immediately after the incident, her 'dying declaration' — recorded in front of the naib tehsildar in Aligarh on September 22 — has been made the basis for invoking the charges of rape and murder. In her dying declaration, the victim had claimed the four youths gang-raped and tried to kill her. What asked about the CBI's charge of lapses, a senior UP Police officer did not deny and listed the suspensions, including that of the Hathras SSP, as the step taken by the authorities.

J&K parties cry vendetta as Farooq assets attached

FAYAZ WANI @ Srinagar

TERMING it as a 'political vendetta to settle political score, the parties in the Valley have slammed attachment of properties of Peoples Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) chairman and National Conference president **Farooq Abdullah** by Enforcement Directorate (ED).

"Attaching Farooq Abdullah's properties is sheer political vendetta as was evident from the abuses heaped on PAGD by the BJP. People of J&K were least impressed & placed their faith in the alliance," PDP chief and PAGD vice president Mehbooba Mufti tweeted.

She alleged that using agencies like the National Investigation Agency (NIA) and the ED to settle scores shows BJPs frustration.

The ED on Saturday attached residential and commercial properties worth nearly ₹12 crore of former J&K CM Farooq Abdullah in an ongoing case of alleged money laundering, drawing strong reaction from National Conference (NC) which said these properties were 'largely ancestral' and he would challenge the action in a court.

Among the properties attached is a house on Gupkar Road where the 84-year-old leader has been residing for several decades. The house is said to have been built in the 1970s by his father late Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, which was inherited by Farooq.

According to Abdullah's son and former J&K CM Omar Abdullah, "There can be no justification for the seizures because they fail the very basic test of having been acquired as the proceeds of the 'crime' being investigated."

The PAGD convenor and CPI (M) state secretary Mohammad Yousuf Tarigami said, "The present case has surfaced at a time when the DDC polls have just concluded."

JK witnessed good voter turnout in DDC polls: LG

A day after the successful completion of the eight-phased maiden DDC polls in Jammu and Kashmir, Lt Governor Manoj Sinha on Sunday hoped the grassroots-level elected representatives would help the UT scale new heights of development.

Thanking voters, the election machinery and security agencies besides parties and independent candidates for their participation in the 'festival of democracy', Sinha said he kept his promise of ensuring free and fair polls.

"If we compare this election with the last LS polls, the turnout this time was double and I give the credit.. to the people,' Sinha said.

FAKE DEGREE

850 GOVT TEACHERS IN RAJ UNDER SCANNER

RAJESH ASNANI @ Jaipur

ABOUT 850 government teachers in Rajasthan used fake degrees to secure promotions in the last five years, the state's education department has revealed.

It has prepared a list of the teachers from the Jodhpur division who have been involved in the fake degree racket.

It has the names of 850 teachers who have received promotions since 2015.

The list will be sent to the Directorate of the Education Department in Bikaner, which will decide on the appropriate course of action.

According to sources, those on the list include 124 teachers of Sanskrit, 252 of Mathematics, 275 of English, 189 teachers of Hindi.

They have all received promotions by using fake degrees.

These teachers have degrees from more than one university outside Jodhpur, sources said.

The Joint Director of the School Education Department in Jodhpur Division, Prem Chand Sankhla said, "Our department has prepared the list of all those who have secured promotions through dubious means from the year 2015 onwards. Names of all those who were cleared by the DPC in the past will be forwarded as and when required by the Directorate."

Although the fake degree racket exists in many other districts of Rajasthan, for the moment, the government's focus is on teachers from the Jodhpur division, Sankhla added.

ICY SPORT

Boys play ice hockey amid winter chill at Lakkar Bazaar in Shimla on Sunday | PTI

'Metro car shed land issue is not about anyone's ego'

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @ Mumbai

WITH the Centre and Maharashtra engaged in one-upmanship over the Metro car shed land issue, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Sunday said the two governments should work together for development and that there should be no ego tussle.

Addressing the people via a live webcast, Uddhav lamented that the Centre had moved court against his government over the issue of proposed Metro car shed at Kanjurmarg and said he was open for resolution of the issue through dialogue.

Let us resolve this Kanjurmarg land issue. This can be done through dialogue. We will give you due credit

Uddhav Thackeray, Maharashtra CM

"I am accused of being an egoist. Yes, I am an egoist when it comes to the interests of Mumbaikars and the welfare of Maharashtra. We saved the environment by not proposing a metro car shed at Array colony," Uddhav said.

The Bombay High Court had on Wednesday stayed the allotment of 102 acres of salt pan land in Mumbai's Kanjurmarg area for construction of an integrated metro car shed. The Centre and the Thackeray government are locked in a tussle over ownership of the land.

The project was earlier planned at Aarey Colony, a green belt. Thackeray said the Kanjurmarg land is 40 hectares is barren and grassy while Aarey land is only 25 hectares, of which five hectares is forest. The Aarey site would have been inadequate in another five years while the government plans at Kanjurmarg are futuristic and would meet the needs for another 50 or 100 years, the CM claimed.

"If one has to indulge in one-upmanship, then what about the Centre's bullet train project? It uses a land parcel worth thousands of crores in the Bandra Kurla Complex, which is the most expensive ... I met farmers opposing the bullet train project and Wadhwan port. We do not believe in stopping farmers and spraying them with cold water... I am appealing to the opposition, 'Let us resolve this issue. This can be done through dialogue. We will give you due credit. The issue is not about my ego and it shouldn't be about yours, too," he said.

"If you create problems in Kanjurmarg and we do in the BKC, it will serve no purpose... The Centre and state must sit together and negotiate. This land belongs to the people and must be used in their interests," the CM said.

Former CM Devendra Fadnavis dismissed the contention that relocating the metro car shed would serve future needs and said it would result in waste of time and money.

ASSEMBLY

BJP to target govt on first day of C'garh Assembly session

Raipur: The winter session of the Chhattisgarh Assembly will begin on Monday with the ruling Congress and opposition BJP expected to clash on issues like paddy procurement, farm distress, crime against women and the Covid-19 situation. The session will continue till December 30 and have seven sittings. Leader of Opposition Dharamlal Kaushik said the Bhupesh Baghel government had failed on all fronts and people of the state, especially farmers, were paying the price.

Covid -ve report a must to attend Uttarakhand House

Dehradun: The MLAs will have to carry Covid negative report to attend the three-day winter session starting from Monday in Uttarakhand. Those who will not be able to produce Covid report will be tested before entry. The MLAs will also be provided Yoga session by Acharya Balkrishna before the seasons starts. The opposition has been demanding to increase the session. Pritam Singh, Congress state president of INC said, "Three days are not enough to address issues."

Jharkhand to reopen schools for class X, XII students from today

MUKESH RANJAN @ Ranchi

KEEPING board exams in mind, the Jharkhand government has directed schools, outside Covid-19 containment zones, to reopen for students of classes X and XII from Monday. Schools will remain shut for students of other classes.

Parents sending their children to schools will have to give a written declaration that they do not live in a containment zone, and are sending their wards to school after taking all necessary safety precautions. Once at school, there will be no assembly or any kind of sports activity.

In schools where there are not enough classroom facilities, students will be asked to come in batches on a rotation basis.

There will be temperature checks for all students, teachers and other staff. They will be allowed to enter the school premises only after washing their hands with soap or sanitizer.

Those showing symptoms or having any kind of illness will be asked to return. Special arrangements will be made for students who miss classes due to illnesses.

Meanwhile, Netarhat, Kasturba, and Indira Gandhi Residential Schools will shut till further orders. Schools, colleges, educational, training and coaching institutions, cinema halls, swimming pools, and entertainment parks have been closed since March due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Jharkhand's Covid-19 tally mounted to 1,12,853 as 247 more people tested positive.

EXPRESS READ

'Excessive use of papers should stop'

Dehradun: Uttarakhand high court, taking note of excessive use of papers by enclosing copies of laws, acts and orders otherwise available electronically has remarked that everyone should make joint efforts to save the environment. "Small steps to save environment should be taken immediately otherwise, it will be too late...," the single bench of Justice Lok Pal Singh said. He also requested the advocates to avoid the wastage of papers. The bench directed the registrar to circulate a copy of this order to office of Bar Association and Bar Council of Uttarakhand.

Naga outfit punishes member for peace march

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Guwahati

AN insurgent of the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (NSCN-IM), who took out a peace march carrying the flags of India and 'Nagalim', was allegedly punished by the outfit.

YS Mashungmi, a Tangkhul Naga from Manipur's Ukhrul district, had taken out a solo foot march from Nagaland's commercial hub Dimapur to spread the message of peace. However, after he reached the state capital of Kohima a day later, he was intercepted by fellow rebels and taken to their camp in Hebron, some 35 km south-west of Dimapur, and allegedly punished.

Initially, none, including the NSCN-IM, could recognise him as he was wearing a mask. His parents, who live in Manipur, were also not aware of his action. The NSCN-IM said Mashungmi is its bonafide member.

"Mashungmi.went for the so-called Peace March carrying both the national flags of India and Nagalim without taking the authority into confidence. Such a one man operation with sensitive political implication is not authorised by NSCN," statement of insurgent group said. It also stated that his "daring venture, no matter how patriotic it may appear in the eyes of the beholder, amounts to violation of disciplinary code of conduct."

Security implication was also taken into account to abort his peace march midway. He is being debriefed to establish the idea behind his peace march, the statement added.

WSaya, who is the deputy "kilonser" (minister) in the ministry of information and publicity, NSCN-IM, refuted media reports about Mashungmi being punished by the outfit. "He was not tortured or punished but reprimanded. He is not in custody but in the camp," Saya told this newspaper on Sunday.

"He did it without consulting his superiors. So, he was recalled," Saya said.

Rajasthan first to make full use of Nirbhaya Fund

In a major feat for the Ashok Gehlot government, Rajasthan has become the first state in the country to make full use of the Nirbhaya Fund released by the Centre. The Union Home Ministry has expressed happiness over the fund use in Rajasthan and wants officials from other states to adopt Rajasthan's Forensic Science Lab (FSL) as a role model. The FSL in the state has purchased four new machines out of the ₹6.28 crores it received under the Nirbhaya Fund. In addition, services of 20 contractual personnel were employed in DNA and Cyber Division was reduced and victims got justice on time.

RAJESH ASNANI
Our correspondent in Jaipur
rajesh.asnani@newindianexpress.com

JAIPUR DIARY

Folk tales to strengthen bond of NRI kids with state

Folk tales have been crucial in the history of every nation as they provide a code of conduct and a set of values for any civilised society. Now, the Rajasthan Foundation plans to use these timeless tales to reconnect children of NRIs from Rajasthan with their roots in the desert state. As a first step, a Folk Storytelling Session and Craft Workshop was held for Global Pravasi children on December 12. Over 150 kids from Australia, Dubai, UK and USA joined online for this fascinating session which featured a folk tale that has captivated generations of children in Rajasthan. 'Chal Meri Dholki, Dhamak Dham' was also retold and written by Padma Shri Vijaydan Detha and it was narrated at this special event by Seema Moondra, a Cultural Art Educator based in the USA.

Pvt schools will get 70% of tuition fees, rules HC

Rajasthan High Court has said that private schools will be able to collect fees only as per the recommendations implemented by the Rajasthan government on October 28. This means that private schools that have taught online will only be able to take 70% of the tuition fees . A division bench of Chief Justice Indrajit Mahanti gave this decision while hearing the appeal filed by the state government and others. There were more than two dozen parties in the case and it took the court a long time to hear everyone. The High Court's double bench reserved the verdict after hearing the case on 16 December.

Rajasthan to encourage online learning

To combat the challenge that Corona crisis has created for students, the Rajasthan government is preparing to teach children with videos rather than books. The state government is getting its studios ready for this. The beginning will be for one million children from sixth to eighth. The next phase will include children from the first to the fifth. The government had started online education platforms through social media. But now a studio is being arranged to make it regular and easy. The task of building the studio has been given to the Education Department. When the schools open, the majority of the syllabus will be available through video.

1,685,785
people the novel coronavirus has killed since it emerged in China last year

GLOBAL WEATHER
LR: Light Rain • HR: Heavy Rain • TDS: Thundershower • LC: Light Cloud • SNY: Sunny

Beijing	18	7	SNY	Los Angeles	31	18	SNY
Colombo	30	26	TDS	Melbourne	24	13	LC
Dhaka	34	25	LC	Moscow	15	9	LR
Dubai	37	25	SNY	New York	13	13	HR
Houston	33	21	LC	Singapore	32	26	TDS
Istanbul	24	17	LC	Toronto	16	11	LC
London	12	9	LR	Washington	19	15	LR

EU isolates UK over virus mutation

Spread of highly contagious variant has to be stopped to prevent virus from changing further

LONDON

EUROPEAN countries banned flights from the UK on Sunday and the WHO called for stronger containment measures as the British government warned that a potent new strain of the virus was "out of control".

As the World Health Organization urged its European members to strengthen measures against a new variant of Covid-19 circulating in Britain, the Netherlands imposed a ban on UK flights from 6:00 am (10:30 IST) on Sunday and Belgium said it would follow suit from midnight with ban on planes and trains from the UK.

Alarm bells were ringing across Europe — which last week became the first region in the world to pass 500,000 deaths from Covid-19 since the pandemic broke out a year ago — after it appeared that a new, even more infectious strain of the virus was raging in parts of Britain.

Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium and Austria all announced restrictions on UK travel. Germany said it will also restrict travel to and from South Africa, where another variant was discovered.

WHY THIS NEW STRAIN HAS SCIENTISTS WORRIED

70% more transmissable than other strains in circulation

23 letters of the virus' genetic code have changed, Sir Patrick Vallance, the British government's chief scientific adviser, told the Financial Times

ORIGINATED IN KENT

% of cases the new strain was responsible for in Kent, where it was first found

1100 cases of the variant have been identified in the United Kingdom

R VALUE: AN INCREASE BY **0.4 for the UK**

What this means is that even if we went back to the lockdown it would still not be enough to bring the R value down to less than 1.0.

Paul Hunter, professor of medicine at the University of East Anglia, told the Times

Italy will join the ban in order to protect its citizens, Foreign Minister Luigi Di Maio wrote on Facebook, without specifying when the measures would come into force.

Austria's health ministry told the *APA* news agency that it would also impose a flight ban, the details of which were still being worked out.

A spokeswoman for WHO Europe told AFP that "across Europe, where transmission is intense and widespread, countries need to redouble their control and prevention approaches."

French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, and EU chiefs Ursula von der Leyen and Charles Michel held a conference call on Sunday about the matter, according to the Elysee palace in Paris.

British PM Boris Johnson said the infectiousness of the new strain had forced his hand into imposing a lockdown across much of England over the Christmas period.

NO EVIDENCE OF HIGHER MORTALITY

Britain's chief medical officer Chris Whitty said that while the new strain was greatly more infectious, "there is no current evidence to suggest (it) causes a higher mortality rate or that it affects vaccines..."

Found in September

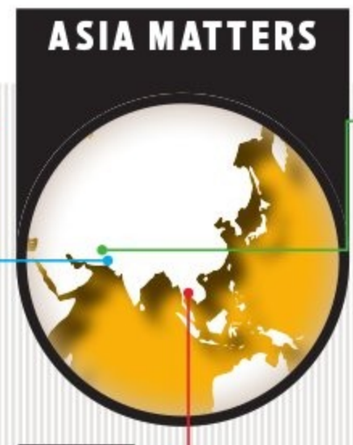
The new strain was identified in southeastern England in September and has been circulating in the area ever since, a WHO official told the BBC.

"What we understand is that it does have increased transmissibility, in terms of its ability to spread," said Maria Van Kerkhove, WHO's technical lead on COVID-19.

She said the strain had also been identified in Denmark, the Netherlands and Australia, where there was one case that didn't spread further.

"The longer this virus spreads, the more opportunities it has to change. "o we really need to do everything we can right now to prevent spread, and minimizing that spread will reduce the chances of it changing." *Agencies*

ASIA MATTERS



PAKISTAN

Pearl murder accused a scapegoat: Lawyer

A lawyer representing the parents of slain US journalist Daniel Pearl has produced a handwritten letter in Pakistan's Supreme Court in which the key accused in the case claimed that he was a "scapegoat" arrested under "US pressure" and the real mastermind was a Karachi-based terrorist. Pearl, the 38-year-old South Asia bureau chief for The Wall Street Journal, was abducted and beheaded while he was in Pakistan investigating a story in 2002 on the links between ISI and al-Qaeda. Al-Qaeda leader Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh and his three aides were convicted and sentenced in case. In April, they were exonerated by a High Court and an appeal against their acquittal is being heard in the Supreme Court. As per the Express Tribune, Faisal Siddiqui, counsel for Pearl's parents, has produced the lettein which Sheikh claimed that the real culprit was a militant, Attaur Rehman, from Karachi.

THAILAND

10,000 to be tested after outbreak linked to seafood

Thailand will test more than 10,000 people for coronavirus after an outbreak linked to its biggest seafood market, officials said Sunday. Hundreds of infections have been linked to Mahachai market and port since a 67-year-old female prawn seller tested positive on Thursday -- most cases among migrant workers from neighbouring Myanmar, who toil in the kingdom's multi-billion-dollar seafood industry. Authorities ordered Myanmar workers around the market not to leave their residences. "We are locking and banning them from moving," said the health ministry's permanent secretary Kietphgum Wongit, adding that authorities would give them food and water.

AFGHANISTAN

9 killed in car bomb blast targeting MP

A car bomb targeting an Afghan lawmaker killed nine people and wounded more than a dozen in Kabul on Sunday, officials said, the latest attack to rock the capital. Kabul has been hit by a wave of deadly violence in recent months despite the Taliban and government engaging in peace talks to end the country's long conflict. Sunday's bombing targeted parliamentarian Khan Mohammad Wardak who was injured in the attack, officials said. "Nine people were killed and 20 others were wounded in the car bomb," Interior Minister Masoud Andrabi told reporters, adding that all the casualties were civilians. The ministry said in a separate statement that women and children were among those wounded by the "terrorist attack". A security source said the car bomb detonated west Kabul. TV footage showed at least two cars on fire.

Dems keep Fed leverage in aid bill talks

WASHINGTON

TOP congressional lawmakers struck a late-night agreement on the last major obstacle to a economic relief package costing nearly $1 trillion, clearing the way for votes.

The breakthrough involved a fight over Federal Reserve emergency powers and was resolved by the Senate's top Democrat and a senior conservative Republican.

Congressional aides confirmed the agreement late Saturday, which clears the way for an expected deal Sunday on the aid bill.

"We're getting very close, very close," Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., as he left the Capitol late Saturday. Schumer spent much of the day going back and forth with GOP Sen. Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania. Toomey had been pressing a provision to close down Fed lending facilities. Democrats and the White House said it was too broadly worded and would have tied the hands of the incoming Biden administration. The compromise, aides said, preserved Toomey's goal but retained the Fed's existing powers to restart similar facilities in the future.

The Covid-19 legislation has been held up after months of dysfunction, posturing and bad faith. But talks turned serious last week as lawmakers on both sides finally faced the deadline of acting before leaving Washington for Christmas.

The relief bill, lawmakers and aides say, would establish a temporary $300 per week supplemental jobless benefits and $600 direct stimulus payments to most Americans. It would provide a fresh round of subsidies for hard-hit businesses and money for schools, health care providers and renters facing eviction. *AP*

Fisheries spat threatens to sink Brexit agreement

LONDON

NEGOTIATIONS for a post-Brexit trade deal teetered on the brink of failure Sunday, overshadowed by the coronavirus crisis and deadlocked over the issue of fishing rights. As Belgium and some of its neighbours closed rail and air links to Britain, which warned it has discovered a new strain of the virus, talks dragged on in Brussels. *AFP*

Trump floated conspiracy theorist as special counsel

WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump floated naming lawyer Sidney Powell, who was booted from his campaign's legal team after pushing unfounded conspiracy theories, as a special counsel investigating allegations of voter fraud as he grasps for straws to stay in power.

During a Friday meeting at the White House, Trump went as far as discussing getting Powell security clearance, according to two people familiar with the meeting, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the private conversation.

That Trump is even entertaining the idea of installing Powell underscores the increasingly desperate steps he has been weighing as he tries to reverse the results of the Nov 3. election, which he lost to Democrat Joe Biden. Trump has been entertaining conspiracy theories and outlandish schemes to try to remain in office, egged on by allies like former national security adviser Michael Flynn and former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, the president's personal attorney.

It is unclear whether Trump intends to try to move forward with the effort to install Powell. Under federal law, the U.S. attorney general, not the president, is responsible for appointing special counsels. And numerous Republicans, from outgoing Attorney General William Barr to governors and state election officials, have said over and over again that there is no evidence of the kind of mass voter fraud that Trump has been baselessly alleging in the weeks since he lost. *AP*

Tech stars exit Silicon Valley

Silicon Valley is seeing departures of some of its high-profile stars as a pandemic-linked shift to remote work and political polarisation have dulled the allure of the key tech industry hub

WHO ARE ALL MOVING

TESLA CHIEF ELON MUSK

- Musk has confirmed that he left California for Texas after a heated squabble earlier this year with authorities over his efforts to defy a state shutdown of his factory to stop the spread of Covid-19
- Musk justified the move by saying he needed to be closer to two of his biggest projects: the development of rockets by his company SpaceX, and construction of a Tesla plant near Austin

ORACLE FOUNDER LARRY ELLISON

- Ellison told employees that he is moving to the Hawaiian island of Lanai, which he bought eight years ago, and will telecommute

PALANTIR CEO ALEX KARP

- Palantir co-founder Joe Lonsdale, meanwhile, moved his venture capital firm from San Francisco to Austin, saying tax rates and political ideology were factors. "Austin is far more tolerant of ideological diversity than SF," Lonsdale said in a tweet in November

PALANTIR & PAYPAL CO-FOUNDER PETER THIEL

- In 2018, investor Peter Thiel announced his departure from the Bay Area for Los Angeles. in an apparently politically motivated move. Thiel was a rare Trump supporter in Silicon Valley

Are vaccines halal or haram? Muslims undecided

JAKARTA

IN October, Indonesian diplomats and Muslim clerics stepped off a plane in China. While the diplomats were there to finalize deals to ensure millions of doses reached Indonesian citizens, the clerics had a much different concern: Whether the Covid-19 vaccine was permissible for use under Islamic law.

As companies race to develop a Covid-19 vaccine and countries scramble to secure doses, questions about the use of pork products — banned by some religious groups — has raised concerns about the possibility of disrupted immunisation campaigns.

Pork-derived gelatin has been widely used as a stabiliser to ensure vaccines remain safe and effective during storage and transport. Some companies have worked for years to develop pork-free vaccines: Swiss pharmaceutical company Novartis has produced a pork-free meningitis vaccine, while Saudi- and Malaysia-based AJ Pharma is currently working on one of their own.

Muslim women ride a motorbike past a coronavirus-themed mural in Jakarta | AP

But demand, existing supply chains, cost and the shorter shelf life of vaccines not containing porcine gelatin means the ingredient is likely to continue to be used in a majority of vaccines for years, said Dr. Salman Waqar, general secretary of the British Islamic Medical Association.

Spokespeople for Pfizer, Moderna and AstraZeneca have said that pork products are not part of their vaccines. But limited supply and preexisting deals worth millions with other companies means that some countries with large Muslim populations will receive vaccines that have not yet been certified to be gelatin-free.

Dilemma for the orthodox

This presents a dilemma for religious communities, including Orthodox Jews and Muslims, where the consumption of pork products is deemed religiously unclean, and how the ban is applied to medicine, he said.

The majority consensus from past debates over pork gelatin use in vaccines is that it is permissible under Islamic law, as "greater harm" would occur if the vaccines weren't used, said Dr. Harunor Rashid, an associate professor at the University of Sydney. Yet there have been dissenting opinions on the issue — some with serious health consequences for Indonesia, which has the world's largest Muslim population, some 225 million. In 2018, the Indonesian Ulema Council, the Muslim clerical body that issues halal certifications, decreed that the measles and rubella vaccines were haram or unlawful, because of the gelatin. *AP*

IN THE COURT OF THE II ADDITIONAL CHIEF METROPOLITAN MAGISTRATE AT BENGALURU
C.MISC. No. 5481/2020

BETWEEN: 1) Sri. Srinivas K.T., S/o. Late Thirumalachar K.J., Aged about 64 years, **2) Smt. Usha,** W/o. Srinivas K.T., Aged about 58 years, **3) Smt. Shyla Jagadish,** W/o. Late K.T. Jagadish, Aged about 60 years, **4) Kum. Vibha J.,** D/o. Late K.T. Jagadish, Aged about 21 years, All are residing at No. 56, Sri Rangadham, Govindappa Road, Basavanagudi, Bengaluru - 560 004. ...**PETITIONERS**

AND: The Registrar of Birth & Death Office of the Commissioner, BBMP, N.R. Square, Bengaluru - 560 001. ...**RESPONDENT**

PUBLIC NOTICE

The petitioners have filed the above petition seeking for an order to get the death certificate of Sri. K.P. Jagadish S/o. Late Thirumalachar and Late T. Lakshmi died on 04/06/2019 at the above address at Bengaluru. The petitioners are in need of Death Certificate for the purpose of bifurcation of Khata. In respect of property bearing No. 12, Yelachanahalli, J.C. Industrial Layout, Bengaluru. The above case is posted **on 04.01.2021.** General Public is hereby informed to appear before the IInd Addl. ACMM, Nrupatunga Road at Bengaluru and filed objection, if any on the aforesaid date **04.01.2021 at 11.00 a.m.**

By order of the Court, Sheristedar, II Addl. CMM Court, Bangalore City.

Advocate for Petitioner : **Syed Aleemulla** and **Syed Ameeth,** Advocates
M: 90363 76521

TATA CAPITAL HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED
Contact Add: Tata Capital Housing Finance Limited, No 82/1, Ground Floor, Krishna Towers | Bengaluru 560025
Regd. Office: 11th Floor, Towe A, peninsula Business Park, Ganapatrao Kadam Marg, Lower Parel, Mumbai-400013. CIN No. U67190MH2008PLC187552.

NOTICE FOR CANCELLATION OF E-AUCTION SALE SCHEDULED ON 22-12-2020

Notice is hereby given that the NOTICE FOR E-AUCTION SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY OF KARTHIK CHANDRASHEKHAR

Schedule of Property: ITEM NO.1: All that piece and parcel of Vacant Site No.1, Katha No. 40, Assessment No. 4, Situated at KG Sreekantapura Village, Madavara Vilage Panchayath, Dasanpura Hobli, Banglaore North Taluk and bounded on: East: Others property, West : 25 ft road, North: Others property and South : Site No.2.

Measuring East to West 43.5ft and North to South 31 ft totally measuring 1348.5 Sq ft.

ITEM NO.2: All that piece and parcel of Vacant Site No.2, Katha No. 40, Assessment No. 4, Situated at KG Sreekantapura Village, Madavara Vilage Panchayath, Dasanpura Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk and bounded on: East: Others property , West : 25 ft road, North: Site No.1 and South: Site No.3.

Measuring East to West 42.5ft and North to South 30 ft totally measuring 1275 Sq ft.

as published in the newspapers namely New Indian Express and Samyuktha Karnataka on 04-12-2020 Auction is hereby cancelled till further notice.

Date: 19-12-2020
Place: Mumbai

Sd/-Arijit Bhatt, Authorized Officer
Tata Capital Housing Finance Ltd. , Mobile: 9029073280
Email: arijit.bhatt@tatacapital.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public on behalf of my client Smt. Shanthala Vinod Nagagouda W/o Kumar P. Vinod Nadagouda, residing at No.410, 12th Main, 5th Cross, R.M.V. Extension, Bangalore-560080, has entered into an Agreement of sale with Smt. Pavana Dhanyakumar W/o C. Dhanyakumar, residing at No.135/A-35, 9th Main, R.M.V. Extension, Sadashivanagara, Bangalore-560080, on 18.12.2020 in respect of below mentioned schedule property. So. this is to inform the general public that no one should enter into any agreement of sale with the above said person in respect of the above property since my client is already an agreement holder of the schedule property. Inspite of this notice if any person were to deal with the above said Smt. Pavana Dhanyakumar in respect of schedule property they would be doing so at their risk and cost. If any one has got any objections or claim over the schedule property they may send their objections to the undersigned within 7 days from this day.

SCHEDULE : All that piece and parcel of the immovable property bearing site No. 4, Property bearing No. 460, Old Khatha No. 2/5, Carved out of Sy. No.2, Present BBMP No. 4, PID No. 99-130-4, situated at Anjaneya Temple Street, Devasandra Village, Kasaba Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk, Bangalore-560054, measuring to an extent of East to West : 41+40/2 ft. and North to South : 51.6+47.6/2 ft., totally measuring 2005 Sq.ft. bounded on : East by : Anjaneyaswamy Temple, West by : Road, North by : Road, South : Private Property.

Sd/- H R. Sadananda,
Advocate
No.21/2, 2nd Floor, Ist Main, Opp. IOB, Gandinagara, Bangalore-09,Ph:9845698508

Date : 18.12.2020
Place : Bangalore

DEUTSCHE BANK AG

Appendix IV [Rule 8 (1)] POSSESSION NOTICE

Whereas, the undersigned being the authorized officer of Deutsche Bank AG, India ("Bank") under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with rule 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice dated **12/02/2020** calling upon the **borrower: Mr. K R Ravichandran and Mrs. Chhaya Ravichandra ("Borrower")** to repay the outstanding amount as mentioned in the notice being **Rs. 35,80,342.37 (Rupees Thirty Five Lakh Eighty Thousand Three Hundred Forty Two and Thirty Seven Paisa Only),** within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The Borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of the powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said act read with rule 9 of the said act on this **17th day of December of the year 2020.**

The Borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Bank for an amount of **Rs. 35,80,342.37 (Rupees Thirty Five Lakh Eighty Thousand Three Hundred Forty Two and Thirty Seven Paisa Only)** and interest thereon.

Desription of the Immovable Property

"SCHEDULE "A"

Item-I
All that piece and parcel of the Property bearing Site No. 1, Katha No.225/A, House List Katha No.70/2, situated at Thanisandra Village, K.R.Puram Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk, now coming under the jurisdiction of Bruhath Bangalore Mahanagara Palike, measuring East to West 40 feet, and North to South 125 + 135/2 feet, totally measuring about 5200 Sq.feet, with all rights, appurtenances whatsoever hereunder or underneath or above the surface and **bounded on the: East by :** Item - III Property, **West by :** Item - II Property, **North by :** Private Property, **South by :** 30 feet Road.

Item-II
All that piece and parcel of the Property bearing Site No.2, Katha No.3777/225A/70/2/2, earlier forming portion of Katha No.225/A, situated at Thanisandra Village, K.R.Puram Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk, now coming under the jurisdiction of Bruhath Bangalore Mahanagara Palike, measuring East to West 40 feet, and North to South 128 + 138/2 feet, totally measuring about 5320 Sq.feet, with all rights, appurtenances whatsoever hereunder or underneath or above the surface and **bounded on the: East by :** Item - I Property, **West by :** Private Property, **North by :** Private Property, **South by :** Road.

Item-III
All that piece and parcel of the Property bearing Katha No.682/A-17/21 (earlier forming portion of Katha No.280, and Property No.1), situated at Thanisandra Village, K.R.Puram Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk, now coming under the jurisdiction of Bruhath Bangalore Mahanagara Palike, measuring on the East 122 feet, on the West 126 feet, on the North 31 feet and on the South 29 feet 6 inches, totally measuring about 3758 Sq.feet, with all rights, appurtenances whatsoever hereunder or underneath or above the surface and **bounded on the: East by :** Item -IV Property, **West by :** Item - I Property, **North by :** Private Property, **South by :** Road.

Item-IV
All that piece and parcel of the Property bearing Katha No.1937/7-10, (earlier forming portion of Katha No.280, and Property No.1), situated at Thanisandra Village, K.R.Puram Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk, now coming under the jurisdiction of Bruhath Bangalore Mahanagara Palike, measuring on the East 110 feet, on the West 122 feet, on the North 80 feet, on the South 80 feet, totally measuring about 9280 Sq.feet, with all rights, appurtenances whatsoever hereunder or underneath or above the surface and **bounded on the: East by :** Private Property, **West by :** Item - III Property, **North by :** Private Property, **South by :** Road.

COMPOSITE SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the Property bearing present BBMP Katha No.15/70/2/1, situated at Thanisandra Village, K.R.Puram Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk, (comprised in converted Sy.No.70/2 of Thanisandra Village, converted vide Conversion Order bearing No.BDS:ALN:(E) SR:(KR.HO) 17/2008-09, dated 17/11/2008, issued by the Deputy Commissioner, Bangalore District) now coming under the jurisdiction of Bruhath Bangalore Mabanagara Palike, measuring East to West on the Northern side 191 feet, on the Southern side 189.5 feet, and North to South on the Eastern side 110 feet, on the Western side 138 feet, totally measuring about 23558 Sq.feet, with all rights, appurtenances whatsoever hereunder or underneath or above the surface and **bounded on the: East by :** Private Property, **West by :** Private Property, **North by :** Private Property, **South by :** 30 feet Road.

SCHEDULE "B"

527 Sq.feet undivided right, title and interest in the immovable property mentioned in Schedule "A" above.

SCHEDULE "C"

Residential Flat bearing No.009, in Ground Floor, measuring about 1566 Sq.feet built up area, containing three bed rooms, together with RCC Roofing, Vitrified flooring, together with one covered car parking space, including proportionate share in common areas such as passages, lobbies, staircase, etc., in the multistoried residential building known as "SLV ENCLAVE" constructed over Schedule "A" Property.

Date: 21/12/2020
Place: Bengaluru

Dhaneshwar Koganur
Authorized Officer,
Deutsche Bank A.G.

ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ

ನನ್ನ ಕಕ್ಷಿದಾರರು ಶ್ರೀಮತಿ ಮುಬಾರಕ್ ಉನ್ನಿಸಾ ಕೋಂ ಲೇಟ್ ಎಸ್.ಪಿ. ಸಲಾಉದ್ದಾ ಎಂಬುವವರಿಂದ ಈ ಕೆಳಕಂಡ ಹೆಡ್ಯೂಲ್ ಸ್ವತ್ತನ್ನು ಖರೀದಿ ಮಾಡಲು ಮಾತುಕತೆ ಮಾಡಿದ್ದು, ಸದರಿ ಸ್ವತ್ತಿಗೆ ಸಂಬಂಧಿಸಿದಂತೆ ಯಾವುದೇ ವ್ಯಕ್ತಿಗಳು, ಹಣಕಾಸು ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳು ಈ ಕೆಳಗೆ ವಿವರಿಸಿರುವ ಹೆಡ್ಯೂಲ್ ಸ್ವತ್ತಿನ ಮಾಲೀಕರಿಗೆ ಅಥವಾ ಯಾವುದೇ ಭಾಗಕ್ಕೆ ಸಂಬಂಧಿಸಿದಂತೆ ತಮ್ಮ ತಂಟೆ ತಕರಾರು, ಹಕ್ಕು ಆಕ್ಷೇಪಣೆ ಅಥವಾ ಅಧಿಕಾರ ಹೊಂದಿದ್ದರೆ ಅಂತಹವರು ಈ ಕೆಳಗೆ ತಿಳಿಸಿರುವ ವಿಳಾಸಕ್ಕೆ ಈ ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ, ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆಯಾದ ನಂತರ 7 ದಿನಗಳೊಳಗೆ ತಮ್ಮ ಹಕ್ಕು ಆಕ್ಷೇಪಣೆ ಏನಾದರೂ ಇದ್ದಲ್ಲಿದ್ದಲ್ಲಿ ಅಂತಹ ವ್ಯಕ್ತಿಗಳು, ಅಥವಾ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳು, ಲಿಖಿತ ದಾಖಲೆಗಳ ಸಮೇತ ಖುದ್ದಾಗಿ ಹಾಜರುಪಡಿಸತಕ್ಕದ್ದು. ತಪ್ಪಿದಲ್ಲಿ ಯಾವುದೇ ತಕರಾರು ಅಥವಾ ಹಕ್ಕು ಆಕ್ಷೇಪಣೆಗಳು ಇಲ್ಲವೆಂದು ಪರಿಗಣಿಸಿ, ನನ್ನ ಕಕ್ಷಿದಾರರು ಖರೀದಿ ಪ್ರಕ್ರಿಯೆಯನ್ನು ಪೂರ್ಣಗೊಳಿಸುವರು. ಹೆಡ್ಯೂಲ್ ಸ್ವತ್ತಿನ ಮೇಲೆ ತದನಂತರ ಬರುವ ಯಾವುದೇ ತಂಟೆ/ತಕರಾರು ಅಥವಾ ಹಕ್ಕು ಆಕ್ಷೇಪಣೆಗಳನ್ನು ನನ್ನ ಕಕ್ಷಿದಾರರು ಪರಿಗಣಿಸುವುದಿಲ್ಲ ಹಾಗೂ ಕಾನೂನು ಬದ್ಧವಾಗಿ ಖರೀದಿ ಪ್ರಕ್ರಿಯೆಯನ್ನು ಮುಂದುವರಿಸುತ್ತಾರೆ ಎಂದು ತಿಳಿಯತಕ್ಕದ್ದು.

ಹೆಡ್ಯೂಲ್ ಸ್ವತ್ತಿನ ವಿವರ

ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ಗ್ರಾಮಾಂತರ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ, ದೇವನಹಳ್ಳಿ ತಾಲ್ಲೂಕು, ವಿಜಯಪುರ ಜೋಬಳಿ, ವಿಜಯಪುರ ಟೌನಿನ 10ನೇ ಸೇರಿದ 3ನೇ ವಿಭಾಗ ಹೊಸ ಬುಡ್ ಸ್ಕ್ಯಾಂಡ್ ರಸ್ತೆಯಲ್ಲಿರುವ ಪುರಸಭೆ ಖಾತೆ ನಂ. 1700/135/167 ರಲ್ಲಿ ವಿಸ್ತೀರ್ಣ : ಪೂರ್ವ-ಪಶ್ಚಿಮ : 17 ಅಡಿಗಳು, ಉತ್ತರ-ದಕ್ಷಿಣ : 27 ಅಡಿಗಳಳ್ಳ ಆರ್.ಸಿ.ಸಿ. ಭಾವನೆಯಳ್ಳ ಅಂಗಡಿಗಳ ಸ್ವತ್ತಿಗೆ ಚಕ್ಕುಬಂಧಿ :

ಪೂರ್ವಕ್ಕೆ : ರಸ್ತೆ.
ಪಶ್ಚಿಮಕ್ಕೆ : ಅಕ್ಷತ್ತ ಕಟ್ಟೆ ಮತ್ತು 8 ಅಡಿ ದಾರಿ
ಉತ್ತರಕ್ಕೆ : ರಸ್ತೆ.
ದಕ್ಷಿಣಕ್ಕೆ : ಮುನಿತಾಯಪ್ಪನ ಸ್ವತ್ತು

ಡಿ.ಎನ್. ನಾಗರಾಜು, ವಕೀಲರು
ವೇಣಾ ಲಾ ಅಸೋಸಿಯೇಟ್ಸ್
ನಂ.10, ಅಚ್ಚುತ ನಿಲಯ, ವೆಂಕಟಪ್ಪ ಲೇಔಟ್ ಪೂರ್ವ, ಕಾಮಾಕ್ಷಿಪಾಳ್ಯ ದಕ್ಷಿಣ, ದೇವನಹಳ್ಳಿ ಟೌನ್, ಮೊ : 9901048313

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MONEY-WISE

AVOID BURNING YOUR FINGERS IN THE STOCK MARKET

MOST of us would make money (or lose money) based on buying some share. Let's say you see the end of Covid-19 scare and bet your money on Indigo and buy the share at ₹1.400 and in a few days' time you see it at ₹1,780 — and feel happy about it. However, at the same time, you also bought CG Power at ₹54 — betting on the Murugappa group taking over a sick company. Suddenly you find it has only sellers at ₹42 and you are wondering what hit you!!

Let us look at another way of buying a share. There is a nice 40-bed hospital near your house. You have done due diligence and think the hotel is a good buy at ₹10 crore — including the land, equipment, doctors' agreements, etc. However, you are not keen to buy at the offer price of ₹10 crore — you are waiting for the right price.

Next week, the chief doctor calls you to say he is willing to sell it to you for ₹20 crore. Will you buy it? Obviously, no. Three weeks later the doctor is under stress to repay some loans so he makes a distress call and offers it to you at ₹9 crore. Will you buy it? Obviously, yes.

Do you notice the difference? When you bought Indigo or CG Power you were treating the shares like the chips at a casino. You had no clue of the business. You just bought the share based on price. You thought share prices of Indigo have gone up from 900 to 1400 so it will go up. It went.

You thought that if M group bought CG Power, so you also bought (they bought at ₹18 and you bought it two months later at ₹54 — 3x of the price they paid) — and lost money!

When you buy an equity share — buy it like a business. Let us say you have evaluated the Hospital business of Fortis Healthcare at ₹145 per share. The market does well valuing a business — however it swings between super pessimism (₹129) as well as super optimism (₹155). Fairly obviously you trust your evaluation and when the market announces ₹129 you buy and at ₹155 you are happy to sell.

Have a vested interest in the price movement — up or down! I taught valuation at a business school long ago. I was also very naive in the 1980s when I used to make a "Project Report" for getting loans for various projects. I now realize how many mistakes I used to make!

Today I would do the valuation and ask myself the following questions too — Will Fortis have the ability to attract good quality doctors?

Will Fortis set up medical schools to train doctors, nurses, and paramedics? Will they set up diagnostic centres in various locations?

Will their hospitals be able to compete against the local hospitals and Apollo in terms of service and pricing?

Do they have a good management team?

Does Apollo have such a deep moat that Fortis can't compete?

Will Fortis develop a good moat?

How will Apollo perform when the promoter changes hands (if at all)?

As a 30-year-old 'valuation' expert, I may not have been able to answer all these questions. Now as a 60-year-old, I realise that I need to keep seeking these answers — and even if I do hold a position if I get a negative answer to any of these questions, I will just sell and run away!

For me, investing has moved from being a science to a mixture of science (numbers) and art (asking questions about the business and management). No, it is not easy, but it has to be learnt. Over the past so many years of investing (I started in 1979 at age 17, and now I am 59) it has been a long journey of learning. I still make mistakes — because I let fear, greed, FOMO, take over.

So what do I do differently? I read the reports — and more importantly try talking to the analysts who are seeing the company on a monthly basis at least. I put a lot of value to statements by N Chandra (Tata Sons) talking about debt reduction. So I heard NC and bought Tata Power, Tata Motors, Titan, Tata Consumer!

I am not a fan of PSU shares but two of India's top managers bought it and I changed my mind. I have benefitted by taking a position in their funds and by buying the shares in which they have a position. Yes, it is a tactical move and I may just dump it once I get my pound of flesh —but let's admit the PSU were beaten down way below its intrinsic price. Like photography and painting — there is a lot of guessing, and you get a lot of bad pictures, but you just keep at it. Your talent is not about just the art of strokes, but knowing the color combination, strokes, structure, etc! Ditto for investing.

Warning: I have a position in all the shares mentioned above.

FINANCIAL ADVICE

PV SUBRAMANYAM

writes at www.subramoney.com and has authored the best seller 'Retire Rich - Invest ₹ 40 a day'

Inflation matters to your savings as the trend determines the direction of interest rates. Currently, the rates are low

WHY INFLATION THREAT LOOMS IN 2021

RAJAS KELKAR

WITH time, inflation eats into your money. This column has previously warned about guarding your savings against an inflation demon. In the New Year, you may want to be concerned about it.

"Elevated inflation has checked in and may be here to stay," summed up Michael Patra, deputy governor of the Reserve Bank of India during the monetary policy committee held earlier in this month. The RBI last week released the minutes of the meeting, and the word 'inflation' made 106 appearances. All the members of the committee that sets key borrowing rates flagged the threat of rising prices of goods and services.

RBI governor Shaktikanta Das said in his comments during the credit policy meeting that a combination of 'cost-push' factors kept inflation high. That included supply-side disruptions, a sharp increase in international commodity prices, high retail margins and raised taxes on petroleum products by both the Centre and States.

"The October 2020 consumer price inflation (CPI) surprised on the upside, both in terms of the extent and depth of price pressures," he said. The committee left repo rates unchanged at 4%. That is the rate at which RBI lends to banks. It sets the benchmark for interest rates bank charge to borrowers. Banks price their loans to borrowers like businesses and individuals higher than the benchmark rate.

There are several reasons why inflation should bother you in the next 12 months. It is likely to be on a firm trend and can influence returns on your investments. During the pandemic, large companies have done better than small companies as they had the cushion of a stronger balance sheet. A lot of small companies have struggled to stay in business, and more significant firms have consolidated their market share.

"It can be argued that large firms benefited in part, at the cost of smaller/unorganised firms," said a report by HSBC, a global bank. "There has been a case of demand moving from small firms to large ones. Small firms tend to be vendors of large firms and delays in payment or non-payment of bills can hurt," the report adds.

The argument here is that if small firms do poorly, it impacts a large section of the people. That kind of a skewed performance leads to demand for more services stoking services inflation. HSBC observes that India's consumption patterns show that the rich in India tend to consume more benefits than the poor. Also, those selling these services would want to reset prices in 2021 as they could not do so in 2020.

The securities arm of Nomura, a Japanese bank, said that the consumer price inflation would remain 1% over RBI's target of 4% in most of 2021. As a result, most analysts expect the RBI monetary policy committee to hold on to repo rates at current levels. Nobody expects any further cuts in rates.

What it means to you

Inflation matters to your savings as the trend determines the direction of interest rates. Your savings and deposits earn an interest. However, your deposits are not going to make a higher rate immediately. Presently, they are at the bottom as the RBI is committed to an 'accommodative' monetary policy stance. In such a situation, interest rates are kept low in the economy to boost credit growth and stimulate the economy.

Rising prices will expand your monthly budget in 2021. If you are in a job, you may want to continue with your 2020 strategy of conserving cash, spending less and investing more.

In the year ahead, your expenses are set to rise. Producers of goods and services are likely to hike prices across the board as they see an increase in the demand. You will have to provide for these higher costs by getting a job if you do not have one. If you are already working, you may expect your average salary to be restored sooner than later. Those who did not have any disruption in pay would want to get a raise to cover for any potential rise in inflation. If you are regular with your systematic investing in equity assets, you should continue with that to benefit from any incremental profits businesses generate.

(The author is editor-in-chief at www.moneyminute.in)

Why price instability should bother you?

There are several reasons why inflation should bother you in the next 12 months. It is likely to be on a firm trend and can influence returns on your investments. Rising prices will expand your monthly budget in 2021. If you are in a job, you may want to continue with your 2020 strategy of conserving cash, spending less and investing more.

AMIT BANDRE

5% Inflation to remain sticky and 1% above RBI's target in most of 2021, according to Nomura

106 That's the total number of times the word 'inflation' appeared in RBI minutes

Smaller towns bearing the load as home loans rise

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

THE pandemic might have taken a chunk out of many salaries and sent general credit flows diving, but the accompanying fall in interest rates and new, lower circle rates in some areas have actually led to a substantial increase in the ticket sizes of home loans. Smaller towns were also the primary drivers of credit this year, not just in home loans but also personal loans and credit card debt.

According to a study by online financial services marketplace BankBazaar, changes in work structures and shifting priorities have resulted in home-buyers who decided to buy homes this year opt for larger spaces and home loans. "Consequently, the average home loans ticket size saw a strong increase from ₹23.82 lakh in 2019 to ₹26.41 lakh in 2020. The average ticket size for women went up from ₹25.66 lakh to ₹31.20 lakh compared with an increase from ₹23.64 lakh to ₹26.04 lakh for men," the report noted, adding that the share of home loans below ₹30 lakh decreased to 68 per cent from 72 per cent a year ago.

While the largest home loan on record this year was from Bengaluru, for an amount of ₹1.46 crore, among non-metros, the largest such loan came from Lucknow, for ₹64.50 lakh. Going forward in 2021, home loans will continue to be a buyer's market, the study noted.

"Continuance of PMAY benefits, choice inventory, slashed registration costs in some places, and record low interest rates on home loans work in favour of those who can afford to buy a home for self-occupation. The reverse migration especially among the older millennials and Gen-Xers to their hometowns thanks to remote working policies could have a very interesting impact," BankBazaar said. This shift in the more affluent working population may be strengthening small-town India's financial heft. In the personal loan category, for instance, non-metros continued to average higher in ticket size, at an average of ₹2.06 lakh compared to ₹1.84 lakh in metros. This trend holds for the credit card segment too.

BNP Paribas foresees Sensex hitting 50,500 next year

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

LAST week, when the market hit a record high, it sent mixed signals among analysts. Many sent a cautious note to their investors and retail investors booked their profit and exit. However, a handful remained too bullish about India's growth story, including BNP Paribas. It expects the Sensex to touch 50,500 by the end of 2021, going ahead – up nearly 9.5 per cent from the current levels, as the research firm retains an 'overweight' rating on India, citing persistence of market leaders and quality stocks. India continues to benefit from two phenomena—big stocks are getting bigger and the availability of quality stocks in relative abundance compared to its Asian peers, it said in a note.

"We continue to focus on quality and market leaders in India. Private banks and insurance companies should continue to benefit from market share gains. Consumer stocks benefitting from domestic rural demand and service exporters benefitting from reviving global deal flow shall continue to dominate the investment landscape," wrote Manishi Raychaudhuri, Head of Asia Pacific equity research, BNP Paribas in his Asia Strategy 2021 report. Among Indian stocks, BNP has included ONGC and Marico in its model portfolio and has dropped Britannia. The optimism was evident as the shares of Burger King more than doubled in best listing day show in three years. After an expected contraction of 11.4 per cent in 2020, it expects India's gross domestic product (GDP) to grow at 11.6 per cent in 2021 and consumer price inflation (CPI) is likely to be at 4.3 per cent next year.

TODAY'S STOCK PICK

MANAPPURAM FINANCE

Current Price ₹174.15

Target Price ₹205

The gold loan business remains on a strong trajectory, and with LTV of 61%, there is good room for growth. As for gold finance, MGFL's performance remains healthy, with strong AUM growth and control on operating expenses. We estimate a consol. loan/PAT CAGR of 17% over FY20–23E.

— Motilal Oswal Securities Limited

Disclaimer: The views and recommendations made above are that of the individual analyst or broking company, and not that of *The New Indian Express*.

Equity markets may witness volatility over the next few sessions

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

STOCK markets continued its bull run and ended on record high last week. While BSE Sensex touched the 47,000 mark on Friday and closed at 46,960.69, Nifty ended at 13,760.55. In the last one week alone, S&P BSE Sensex rallied 861 points or 1.87 per cent while the Nifty 50 was up 1.83 per cent. Experts feel the positive momentum may hit a pause button in the coming seasons even as external factors appear to be favorable.

"The market remained buoyant on earlier-than-expected deployment of Covid-19 vaccines, impending US fiscal stimulus and decreasing domestic Covid-19 cases. FIIs flows though strong have moderated some bit from the previous week. The average daily FII flows in the first four days of the week was ?3,200 crore. Going forward, expect FII flows to slowdown in the next two weeks as we head towards Christmas vacation. Markets could turn volatile next week due to the monthly expiry and lesser participation from FIIs," said Rusmik Oza, Executive VP, Head of Fundamental Research at Kotak Securities. The brokerage expects Nifty-50 to consolidate between 13,000 & 14,000 levels till the end of this month.

Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services, said, "Going ahead, the markets may continue with its positive bias on the back of abundant liquidity, effective vaccine rollout and increasing prospects of a US financial stimulus...However, intermittent profit-booking cannot be ruled out as the Christmas vacation starts this week. Markets could also be volatile given monthly futures and options expiry." According to Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities Nifty ended up for the seventh consecutive week, but the advance-decline ratio has deteriorated over the past two days. "Hence now there seems to be a need for caution," he added.

Trading above 13,750 is positive from a short-term perspective. The market may gain momentum and will open the gate for a movement till 13,990.

Ashis Biswas, Head of Technical Research, Capital Via Global Research Ltd

Steps to that foreign degree you have been eyeing to get yourselves upskilled

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ Bengaluru

AT a time when upskilling has become very crucial to stabilise one's career and financial security, graduating from a prestigious foreign university would be an icing on the cake. However, the pandemic has presented with it the financial turbulent times and delayed the prospects of getting an international degree. A carefully laid out plan can very well help one attain the dream degree, experts say. Here are a few tips to consider before setting out on a journey to excel in academics without having to deal much with money-related stress.

Narrow your choices

If you are someone who earlier wanted to apply in several institutions in countries like the UK and the US, it is time to zero-in on a few considering you have to shell out application fees ranging from ₹10,000-15,000 for each one. Hence, a proper research a few months before the admissions open is important so that one doesn't unnecessarily spend a lot of money simply on applying for courses/ colleges that aren't relevant to one's needs.

Apply for fellowships

This is often a key criteria for a majority of Indian students who wish to pursue their higher studies abroad but their parents want to avoid the burden of loans and personal debts. Financial planners say bank loans should be the last resort considering the high rate of interest in the range of 10-15 per cent. When it comes to scholarships, a majority of them are merit based aimed to waive off most of the tuition fees, but one can also apply for grants/ fellowships separately under government or private institution-sponsored programmes. These fellowships are extremely strict in terms of assessments and hence apply only if you fit under the criteria.

Other expenses

In countries like the UK, US and Australia, foreign students usually opt for shared accomodation to split the rental outside the college campuses. On-premise accommodations are comparatively expensive and usually not within the budget if you aren't a grantee or a scholar. Public transport as per experts is a viable option for daily travel and fits well within the budget. It is always advisable to gauge your yearly/ monthly expenses and stick to it under all circumstances.

EXPRESS READ

Six suitors submit bids for Reliance Home

New Delhi: Six suitors, including Kotak Special Situations Fund (KSSF) and Asset Reconstruction Company (India) Limited (ARCIL), have submitted bids for Reliance Home Finance, part of Anil Ambani-promoted Reliance Group. Only two bidders submitted compliant and binding bids while four bids are non-binding and not compliant with bid conditions, sources told PTI.

Gold imports dip 40% in Apr-Nov to $12.3 bn

New Delhi: Gold imports, which have a bearing on the current account deficit, fell 40 per cent to $12.3 billion during April-November due to fall in demand in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to data from the commerce ministry. Imports of the yellow metal stood at $20.6 billion in the corresponding period of 2019-20. Imports, however, recorded a growth of 2.65 per cent in November to $3 billion.

WTA season to start in Abu Dhabi on Jan 5

The 2021 WTA season will start in Abu Dhabi on January 5, the governing body of women's tennis said, as it unveiled an early-season calendar that revolves around the Australian Open. The season will kick off with the Abu Dhabi WTA Women's Tennis Open, a WTA 500 level event on January 5 while qualifying for the Australian Open will take place in Dubai on January 10-13.

FORGET THE KO BEFORE BOXING DAY

With five days to recover from the massacre, it's time for India to calm down and make the right changes

VENKATA KRISHNA B @Chennai

CRISIS situations often cause knee-jerk reactions. Especially, if it happens to be an unprecedented low. It is a sort of situation which leads to 'heads will roll' talk. The day after the Indian team suffered one of its lowest moments in history, there were no such calls. There was calm. SoS calls were not made. But there was acknowledgment that even if it needs a postmortem, this isn't the time. That no outlandish comments were made to the media hinted at something — the captain and team management still have the backing of the board and they don't see reasons to make changes for the sake of them.

At times like this, teams need such backing. Surely this was an exceptional collapse, caused by a combination of factors that were not in India's control. Former players, who usually jump at every chance of criticising the current lot, were sympathetic in their analysis. It is not that the BCCI is not know for knee-jerk actions. Head coach Ravi Shastri will remember how the board had sent him and three others in the middle of an England tour in 2014, after a string of bad performances.

Ajinkya Rahane will lead Team India for the third time in Tests at Melbourne

With captain Virat Kohli flying back home, India have five days to forget Adelaide and prepare for the Boxing Day Test. Changes are bound to be there. Shubman Gill, KL Rahul and Rishabh Pant might form a new-look batting unit with Mohammed Siraj taking the injured Mohammed Shami's place. The next four weeks are going to test the character of this team, sans its match-winners, which means the likes of Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane, Ravichandran Ashwin and Rahul have to put their hands up and lift the team out of the rubble.

Speaking after the match and without taking names, Kohli said his absence is an opportunity for others to take responsibility. "I'm pretty confident that the team will bounce back strongly in Melbourne. A few of the guys are going to realise their true characters and how they can step up for the side. I'm confident that we will learn from this. I don't think we have ever had a bad batting collapse than this. It can only go up from here and (we) understand as a team we can do special things when there is a partnership," he said.

With a 1-0 lead, Australia will come hard at India at MCG. With Kohli not around, they will target Pujara and Rahane. India will have a huge task, something they haven't encountered before. Barring Pujara, India don't have any batsman who averages above 40 in SENA countries, which only highlights the challenge lying ahead of this batting line-up.

Speaking after the Test, Kohli didn't want to read a great deal into the collapse, but he did say how important it is for the individuals to have a clear idea of how they want to play. "Whenever we have performed well, especially overseas... see you can make all the team plans you want, it is more important what the mindset of the individuals taking the field is. At an individual level, you have to be clear when you step on the field as to how you want to play. Whether you want to take the game forward or you want to play absolutely solid. That you are very sound defensively and are feeling comfortable. As much as you plan on the team level, individuals need to have the right mindset in these critical moments and take the game forward," Kohli said.

The onus is now on Rahane, who will captain the side in the next three Tests, to regroup the team and lead from the front. In the past tough situations have brought the best in him. Lets hope for India's sake that he steps up on Boxing Day too.

POSSIBLE CHANGES

SHUBMAN GILL

Although Prithvi Shaw should get two Tests on the trot before being dumped, the manner of his dismissals in Adelaide opens a strong case for Gill. The Punjab youngster averages 68.78 in first-class cricket. Sunil Gavaskar, Allan Border have spoken highly of him.

KL RAHUL

Virat Kohli's absence brings Rahul back in the picture. Opener in 33 of his 36 Tests, he may have to bat at No 6 if Ajinkya Rahane and Hanuma Vihari move up a slot each. Was not in the XI in the last seven Tests India played.

RISHABH PANT

A wicketkeeper out of sorts as batsman against fast bowling overseas is not ideal in a fragile batting order. For all his keeping brilliance, Wriddhiman Saha may have to make way for Pant. Questions remain on Pant's ability to handle this kind of bowling though.

MOHAMMED SIRAJ/NAVDEEP SAINI

In Md Shami's absence, either Siraj or Saini will earn a maiden Test cap. Before going for runs in limited-overs, Saini was just ahead in the race.

COLOGNE WORLD CUP

Happy with medal haul, boxing coach says best yet to come

FIROZ MIRZA @Chennai

INDIAN women boxers came up with a perfect score in the Cologne World Cup. All five of them won medals (2 gold, 1 silver and 2 bronze) in their respective weight categories in Germany. Chief coach Raffaele Bergamasco is pleased with the show and feels they have yet not reached their optimum level yet.

"It's a good show, especially after such a long break caused by the pandemic," the Italian told this daily from Cologne. "I will say they have reached 70 per cent of their optimum level. From here, they will only improve. It's a good thing, as there is still time for the Olympics. A few more overseas training camps and events will help them reach their best."

The Indian team, including men boxers, won nine medals to finish second behind Germany in the standings. The three gold medals were bagged by Amit Panghal (men's 52kg), Manisha Moun (women's 57kg) and Simranjit Kaur (women's 60kg). The boxers returned to India on Sunday night. High-performance director Santiago Nieva and Bergamasco will return in the first week of January.

Raffaele Bergamasco

INDIA'S MEDALLISTS

Gold: Amit Panghal (52kg), Manisha Moun (57kg) and Simranjit Kaur (60kg).
Silver: Satish Kumar (+91kg), Sakshi Choudhary (57kg).
Bronze: Sonia Lather (57kg), Pooja Rani (75kg), Gaurav Solanki (57kg), Md Hussamudin (57kg).

"The boxers will leave for their homes after reaching India. Santiago and I will be back after Christmas break. As I was told, the national camp will resume either on January 3 or 4 but the venue has not been finalised yet. The federation has come up with a couple of options as far as the venue is concerned. It will be decided soon," informed Bergamasco.

The tournament brought an end to the Indian team's 67-day training-cum-competition tour of Europe. Earlier, they took part in the Alexis Vastine international tournament in Nantes, France, in October, and won three gold, one silver and three bronze medals.

"Alexis Vastine was their first competitive event and since then they trained hard in Italy. They got good sparring partners and it reflected in their performance in the World Cup. The way Simranjit and Manisha competed, it showed they have improved a lot," the chief coach said. Simranjit defeated local favourite Maya Kleinhans in the final, while Manisha beat compatriot Sakshi Choudhary.

Bergamasco thinks the trip has worked well for the boxers and hopes they will get more such trips ahead of the Tokyo Games. "Despite the lockdown, these boxers never let their guard down. They continued with their training in India. The exposure trip only helped them get better. There are a couple of invitations for the team. We will discuss it with AIBA and SAI. Once approved, the boxers can train overseas again."

Bengaluru's attack vs ATKMB's defence

ASHIM SUNAM @ Bengaluru

ATTACK versus defence. In a nutshell, this is what Monday's ISL match in Fatorda is about. Bengaluru FC have been impressive up front, having scored 11 goals in six matches. Six of those came in the last two. Confidence levels will also be high after two straight wins. And that's what they need, for their opponents come with the reputation of being the best defensively-organised team of the tournament. In six matches, ATK Mohun Bagan have conceded just thrice.

Bengaluru are the only unbeaten team so far. But they are third in standings, behind Mumbai City FC and Mohun Bagan. A win for either team on Monday will force changes in positions in the table.

The Blues will depend on forwards Sunil Chhetri, Cleiton Silva and Kristian Opseth. The trio have to be on top of their game against the strong defensive unit of ATK Mohun Bagan. "They (ATKMB) know how to defend and how to be dangerous in their attacks. That is what we have to try and avoid. We have to create enough chances because they are good defensively. They employ a very good defensive structure and we will try to beat them," said BFC coach Carles Cuadrat.

Cleiton Silva

With players like Sandesh Jhingan, Pritam Kotal, ATK Mohun Bagan can make their presence felt at the back. Scoring against them has been tough too. Also, they are one of the best teams in the league when it comes to counterattacks. Forwards Roy Krishna, Manvir Singh and David Williams are going to be key. It has to be seen what they do in the first half as their goals have come in the second half.

"It's impossible for us to score only in the second half. Normally, it depends on a situation that is necessary to score.... You have 90 minutes and the idea is to score when you can," said coach Antonio Habas.

Ashique undergoes surgery

Bengaluru will be without Ashique Kuruniyan, who underwent a surgery for fractures he suffered on his face in their last game against Odisha.

Sunday's result: Mumbai City FC 2 (Vignesh Dakshinamurthy 38', Adm Le Fondre 59') **bt** Hyderabad FC 0; SC East Bengal 1 (Bakary Kone 13', OG) **drw** with Kerala Blasters 1 (Jeakson Singh 90+5').

FOX OFFICE HIT

Jamie Vardy (left) celebrates his goal against Tottenham Hotspur. An own-goal from Toby Alderweireld gave Leicester City a 2-0 win at White Hart Lane on Sunday | AFP

EXPRESS READ

3rd Test at SCG: CA

ADELAIDE: Cricket Australia on Sunday said the SCG remains its preferred venue for the third Test against India after reports emerged that the governing body is contemplating swapping the last two games of the four-Test series due to growing Covid-19 cases in Sydney.

INR C'ship: Gill wins Rd 2

ITANAGAR: Gaurav Gill proved to be the king of the mountains once again, winning Round 2 of the Champions Yacht Club FMSCI Indian National Rally Championship, the Rally of Arunachal, Sunday. Gill ruled the weekend, to make it a grand double for JK Tyre.

Election talk at AIFF AGM

AYANTAN CHOWDHURY @ New Delhi

THE All India Football Federation's (AIFF) annual general meeting (AGM) will be held online on Monday. However, there is no clarity over elections. They are due but not on the agenda. State associations are hoping the meeting will give some updates on the election procedure.

The current executive committee's four-year term is set to end on Monday. Under normal circumstances, elections would have been the primary agenda of the AGM. Praful Patel, who has been AIFF president since 2012, will be ineligible to contest as per the National Sports Development Code.

According to the Code, the president of a NSF can hold office for a maximum of three terms. Out of 36 state associations, 21 had written to the AIFF asking them to hold talks on the delay in conducting elections in order to find a way out and zero in on a date.

The federation had written back stating that due to non-finalisation of its constitution, polls could not be held.

Full story: newindianexpress.com

GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU
DEPARTMENT OF INTEGRATED CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
No.1, Dr. M.G.R.Salai, Taramani, Chennai - 600 113.
TENDER NOTICE
Ref. No.3181 / NC-3 / 2020 Dated 21.12.2020
Sealed tenders are invited from the manufacturers / dealers for the supply of Ready-made colour uniforms to the Pre-School children attending anganwadi centres in 355 projects of Tamilnadu under the department of Integrated Child Development Services.
The tender document and other details can be obtained from above mentioned office. The tender document can also be downloaded from the website **www.tender.tn.gov.in** free of cost.
DIPR/4766/TENDER/2020 Director cum Mission Director

Government of Karnataka
Additional Chief Secretary to Government
Finance Department,
Vidhana Soudha, Bengaluru
No.: FD 01 BMB 2020 Date: 17.12.2020
KARNATAKA GOVERNMENT STOCK (SECURITIES)
1. Aggregate Amount : Total Rs. 2000 Crore (Rs.1000 Crore - 10 Year Tenure and Rs.1000 Crore - 14 Year Tenure)
2. Method of Issue : By auction, through PDO, RBI, Mumbai (Fort)
3. Date of auction : December 22, 2020
Government of Karnataka invites subscription to the above securities. Copies of the Notification and Application forms may be obtained from PDO, RBI, Bengaluru. Non-competitive bidding facility has been introduced by RBI to encourage participation of retail investors. The Government stock up to 10% of the notified amount of the sale will be allotted to eligible individuals and institutions. Sample Tender Forms and the revised scheme of Non-competitive bidding facility is available on the website **www.rbi.org.in**
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3rd Floor, DM & HS Campus, Sultan Bazar, Koti, Hyderabad - 500 095.
Ph : 040-24745510 : E-mail : gmdrugs-msidc@gmail.com
Tender Notice No.5/TSMSIDC/MW/2020-21, Dt.19.12.2020
Tenders are invited through e-procurement platform (online) for Procurement of **T.No.5A** : Adverse Event Following Immunization (AEFI) Treatment Kit. **T.No.5B** : Surgical & Consumables and Scheme items. **T.No.5C**: General Medicines, Antibiotics, IV Fluids and Scheme item. **T.No.5D** : Procurement and Supply of Medical Equipment and Hospital Furniture. **T.No.5E**: Tenders are invited to identify Patient Provider Support Agency (PPSA) for enhancement of private sector involvement in National TB control program proposed in 5 districts. **T.No.5F** : Procurement and Supply of 1) Diagnosis (Hemoglobinopathies for screening) Equipments 2) Reagents & Consumables and 3) Food Labs items. **T.No.5G** : Procurement and supply of Cath lab and MRI.
Managing Director, TSMSIDC reserves the right to cancel the tender at any time without assigning any reason. For complete details, please visit Websites : **http://www.tsmsidc.telangana.gov.in** & **https://tender.telangana.gov.in** from **21.12.2020** onwards.
R.O. No.: 1281-PP/CL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2020-21 Sd/- Managing Director

TIRUPPUR SMART CITY LIMITED
TENDER NOTICE
Tenders are invited in Two cover system for Design and construction of Sewage Treatment plants at a capacity of **3MLD (1 No) Sewage treatment plant** South side and **2MLD (1 No) Sewage treatment plant** at North side of the **Noyyal River** including 5 years of Operation Maintenance on **DBOT** Basis in Tiruppur City Municipal Corporation area under **Smart City Mission** at an estimate cost of **Rs. 9.40 Crores** under Smart City Mission by **Managing Director, Tiruppur Smart City Limited** upto **03.00 P.M. on 25.01.2021** and the same will be opened by Managing Director, Tiruppur Smart City Limited or his authorized person on the same day at **03.30 PM** in the presence of the contractors or their representatives present at that time. The tender documents can be downloaded from the website **https://tntenders.gov.in** upto **2.00 P.M.** on **24.01.2021.** Any further details will be heard from Tiruppur City Municipal Corporation office in any of the working day if required. Pre-bid meeting for the above work will be held on **08.01.2021** at **11.00 A.M.** respectively. The Managing Director, Tiruppur Smart City Limited reserves the rights to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason thereof. The bidders shall not have the option of submitting their proposals electronically.
Roc. No. : E1/6630(II-e)/ 2017
Place : Tiruppur
Date : 18.12.2020 DIPR/4781/TENDER/2020
Managing Director, Tiruppur Smart City Limited

Government of Karnataka
KARNATAKA SECONDARY EDUCATION EXAMINATION BOARD
6TH Cross, Malleshwaram, Bengaluru-03, Ph: 080-23349434. Fax: 23347670
No: B1/DVS & WP/12/2020-21/Call-2 Date: 16.12.2020
e-AUCTION NOTIFICATION
The Director, Karnataka Secondary Education Examination Board, here by invites e-AUCTION bidding from eligible bidders for the sale and disposal of valued answer booklets, unused answer booklets, AML & CNR formats, used envelopes and waste cloths in a single lot on 'As is where is basis' pertaining to SSLC Examination 2020 as per KTPP Act-1999, through e-procurement portal only. e-AUCTION documents may be downloaded from **www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in** and **www.kseeb.kar.nic.in** e-AUCTION Commencement date is **21.12.2020** and the last date for submission is **06.01.2021 at 4.00 pm.** Pre-bid meeting is on **28.12.2020 at 11.30 a.m.** Technical bid will be opened on **09.01.2021 at 11.30 a.m.** Reserve price of this e-AUCTION is **Rs. 77,15,000/-.** The Earnest Money Deposit is **Rs. 3,85,750/-** for more details contact board during office hours.
Sd/- Director(Exams).
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Invited sealed tenders for vehicles by 2 cover system for transportation of milk from the rural villages to Salem FBD, BMC's and Chilling Center Attur to operate 17 lorries / Mini Lorries, 33 Mini autos and 9 taxi /Diesel for Milk procurement Team Office/ Input route works for the period of 2020 - 2023 (3 Years). The cost of tender form is Rs.200/-.
a) EMD for 6.0 ton to 9.0 tons above hired lorries - Rs.20,000/-
b) EMD for 4.5 ton to 6.0 ton hired lorries - Rs.15,000/-
c) EMD for 2.5 ton to 4.5 ton hired lorries - Rs.10,000/-
d) EMD for 1.25 ton to 2.5 ton hired lorries - Rs.5,000/-
e) EMD for 0.7 ton to 1.25 ton hired (Mini lorries/Autos/Car/ (Diesel) - Rs.3,000/-
The tender form will be issued from the date of issue of advertisement to **26.01.2021** up to **3.00** p.m. on all working days. The EMD must be paid only as DD in favor of **"GENERAL MANAGER, SDCMPU Ltd"** payable at Salem and the duly filled tender forms should be submitted on or before **27.01.2021** by **02.00** PM. The opening of the tender forms will be on **27.01.2021** the same day itself by **02.30** p.m. Tender forms can also be down loaded from **"www.tenders.tn.gov.in"** on free of cost. All other details are enclosed with the tender form.
DIPR/ 4777 /TENDER/2020 GENERAL MANAGER

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU
HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT
TAMIL NADU ROAD SECTOR PROJECT II
Assignment Title : Engagement of Independent Agency for End Term impact evaluation of Social and Environmental safeguard implementation in projects under TNRSP-II
Reference No : IN-TNRSP-ETIE-CS-CQS dated. 09.12.2020
Request for Expression of Interest (REOI)
Experienced Consultants are invited to submit their Expression of Interest (EOI) for carrying out the above mentioned assignment. Further details and REOI are available in the website: **www.tnrsp.gov.in.**
Last date for receipt of EOI : **06.01.2021 upto 15.00 hrs.**
Superintending Engineer (H),
(For and on behalf of the Governor of Tamil Nadu)
Tamil Nadu Road Sector Project II, Chennai-28.
TNMB Building, 1st Floor, 171, South Kesavaperumal Puram, Off Greenways Road, R.A.Puram, Chennai- 600 028. Tamil Nadu, India. Telephone No: +91 44 24951072
Email: tnrsp1@gmail.com/ Website: www.tnrsp.gov.in
DIPR/4757/TENDER/2020

CMDA CHENNAI METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Thalamuthu Natarajan Building, No.1, Gandhi Irwin Road, Egmore, Chennai - 600 008.
REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (REOI)
(Consulting Services – Individual Selection)
Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority (CMDA), Government of Tamil Nadu has applied for financing from the World Bank towards the cost of the Tamil Nadu Housing and Habitat Development Project. CMDA now invites eligible individual consultants / specialists to indicate their interest in providing the services for the below mentioned assignment under the Tamil Nadu Housing and Habitat Development Project.
"Financial Management Expert for Project Implement Unit of CMDA under Tamil Nadu Housing and Habitat Development Project"
The detailed REOI and Terms of Reference are available in the websites - www.cmdachennai.gov.in and www.tenders.tn.gov.in **The Expression of Interest (EOI) shall be submitted.** Last date and time for submission of EOI is **04.01.2021 up to 5.00 p.m.** The EOI shall be sent to the Member Secretary, Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority, Thalamuthu Natarajan Building, No.1, Gandhi Irwin Road, Egmore, Chennai - 600 008, Tamil Nadu, India.
e.mail: cmdaprocurement@gmail.com
Member Secretary,
DIPR/4779/TENDER/2020 Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority

Thailand will test more than 10,000 people for coronavirus after an outbreak linked to its biggest seafood market, officials said. Nearly 700 new infections have been linked to Mahachai market and port since a female prawn seller tested positive on Thursday.

FDA INVESTIGATES ALLERGIC REACTIONS TO JAB

Chemical called polyethylene glycol, an ingredient in Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, could be the reason for such responses, says official

HEALTH

WASHINGTON: A week after granting Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine emergency authorisation, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is investigating allergic reactions to the jab that were reported in multiple states after it began to be administered this week.

Peter Marks, director of the FDA's Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research, told reporters late Friday that the reactions had been reported in more than one state besides Alaska and that the FDA is probing five reactions.

"We are working hand-in-hand with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and we've actually been working closely with our United Kingdom colleagues, who reported the allergic reaction. We'll be looking at all the data we can from each of these reactions to sort out exactly what happened, and we'll also be looking to try to understand which component of the vaccine might be helping to produce them," Marks said.

"We have at this point the right mitigation strategy with

the availability of treatment for a severe allergic reaction being at the ready. We'll continue to monitor it very closely."

The FDA official said that one component of the vaccine, polyethylene glycol, may be the cause of the allergic reactions seen in both the United Kingdom and the United States following the launch of mass inoculation programs.

More than a week ago, two medical professionals in the United Kingdom suffered an allergic reaction after receiving the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. Similar reactions were also observed in the US state of Alaska more recently. A few days ago, Tiffany Dover, a head nurse at Chattanooga, passed out during a press briefing after taking a Pfizer-BionTech's coronavirus vaccine. The nurse was addressing media from CHI Memorial Hospital in Chattanooga, Tennessee informing them that her team was among the first ones who were receiving a vaccine against coronavirus.

"We will be monitoring closely what's going on. We are working very closely with the CDC on these, and there have been meetings between the CDC and FDA making sure we are keeping close track of what is going on," the he said.

FACT OF THE MATTER

Rare comet near Sun

SPACE

An astronomer has spotted a tiny speck flying past the Sun which is a recently discovered rare comet, as the world witnessed the total solar eclipse this month. This comet was first spotted in satellite data by Thai amateur astronomer Worachate Boonplod on the NASA-funded Sungrazer Project, as Chile and Argentina witnessed the total solar eclipse on December 14, reports NASA. Around the time the eclipse image was taken, the comet was travelling at roughly 7,24,205 kms per hour, about 4.3 million kms from the Sun's surface. The comet was around 50 feet in diameter. It then disintegrated to dust particles due to intense solar radiation, a few hours before reaching its closest point to the Sun. Sungrazer is a citizen science project that invites anyone to search for and discover new comets in images from the joint European Space Agency (ESA) and NASA Solar.

Machu Pichu reopens again

ARCHAEOLOGY

The mountainous Inca citadel of Machu Picchu in Peru will reopen to tourists on Saturday after an agreement was reached to halt protests by locals over train services, officials said. The protests had forced the site to close on Monday, just six weeks after it reopened following an almost eight-month closure due to the coronavirus pandemic. Residents of the towns of Machu Picchu and Ollantaytambo have been demanding cheaper fares and more frequent trains on the route between Cusco and Machu Picchu. The train is the only means of transport for tourists, but it is also widely used by locals. Protesters occupied the tracks, which sparked clashes with the police and threats to occupy the site. Authorities in the region said in a statement on Saturday that "social order has been reestablished."

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WARMING UP

A woman ice hockey player practises in Leh, Lakdakh, on Sunday | PTI

Seaweed business stays afloat despite pandemic

FOOD

SACO (MAINE): The coronavirus pandemic has been a struggle for much of American seafood, but at least one sector of the industry has found a way to grow during the crisis — the seaweed business.

Seaweed harvesting and farming, based largely along the rocky and chilly coast of Maine, has grown for several years as interest in foods and nutritional products made with the gooey marine algae have risen in popularity. Like many pieces of the seafood industry, seaweed is highly dependent on the restaurant sector, which made the pandemic a potentially major setback.

But that hasn't been the case, according to state records and members of the industry. Representatives for Atlantic Sea Farms, a Saco company that works with two dozen seaweed farmers and accounts for most of the seaweed aquaculture in the state, said it nearly doubled its harvest this year to 450,000 pounds.

Other growers said they continued harvesting seaweed through the pandemic, though finding workers and buyers was more complicated than a typical year. The industry was able to pivot to selling more of its products via retail locations than restaurants, and that meant it avoided the trouble that befell other seafood industries, such as the hard-hit oyster business, said Tollef Olson, president of the Maine Seaweed Council.

"Almost all the products we put out have been stabilised," Olson said. "Some of the wholesale business definitely dropped off, but we're seeing more shelf space, and more online platforms."

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DAY'S DIARY

An animated first!

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, the world's first full-length animated feature, premiered in Los Angeles on this day in 1937

AN AVALANCHE OF WORK

At a cost of $1.4 million, the Disney film (83 minutes in length) had taken three years, 750 artists and almost two million individual paintings to create

HISTORY IN THE MAKING

Demand for tickets was so strong that sales were limited to four per person. More than 30,000 fans who couldn't score a ticket gathered outside the theatre just to be a part of the historic event

RAKING IN THE MOOLAH

The movie's original worldwide gross totalled $8.5 million – which would have been hundreds of millions of dollars today

'I can't dilute a story to keep KGF franchise alive'

PG 4

'Tis the season to go local

Channapatna toys are making an appearance on Christmas trees, along with jute and other such ornaments, as people go vocal for local this year

MONIKA MONALISA

THIS Christmas, Rudolph is not going to come from Santa's village in Lapland, but from the land of toys, Channapatna. Following the mantra of vocal for local, many in the city are opting for house-shaped ornaments made of jute, wooden toy snowmen and reindeers, and other such ornaments for their Christmas trees.

Karthik Vaidyanathan has been working towards reviving the 200-year-old art of making wooden Channapatna toys. This year, his venture, Varanam Art Collective, is offering little snowmen and reindeers, tree hangers, bells and decorative baubles. "Since these things are not traditionally made in Channapatna, the Christmas special is being done for this season. We have designed the toys and commissioned the artisans to make these," says Vaidyanathan, who started the venture in 2014. These toys are also popular as gifts, with the price starting at ₹275.

Door knob ornaments made of jute, Christmas-themed cushion covers, stockings and wall hangings... Soumya Thomas is the one-man army behind these products available at A Bee In The Garden. But her most popular product this year is the Kutch cowbell, which she has converted into a tree hanger by adding lace or embroidered lining to it. "It's a crowd favourite. I have received maximum orders for it. It might be because of the chiming sound it creates," says Thomas, who has been running the business for one year. Thomas, whose products are priced at ₹150 onwards, says this Christmas has been busier than the last, due to an increase in people's interest in homemade goods. "Last year, I started small because it was my first attempt. This year, there is a huge surge in demand for locally sourced or sustainable ornaments. Maybe it's a side effect of the pandemic, with people wishing to support local businesses and boycott Chinese goods," says the 37-year-old. She adds that people are keen on making the most of their indoor celebrations as well.

Agrees Barath Coumar, who is one of the directors of the enterprise, This That and Everything Else, which has been working towards reviving Channapatna toys and terracotta art work. "Our biggest competition is China-made goods. This year, many people have been turning towards local products. Even if they are not buyers, they are promoting us on social media or through word of mouth," says Coumar, adding that this is the first time they have started shipping across India.

There is a demand for locally sourced ornaments. Maybe it's a side effect of the pandemic, with people wishing to go local and boycott Chinese goods

Soumya Thomas, founder, A Bee In The Garden

On the 96th birth anniversary of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, 15 classical dancers will bring alive the former PM's poetry

Rhythm, rhyme and remembrance

Lakshmi Reddy

I've read Vajpayee's poetry and learnt more about him. But the challenge was choosing works that had the elements of navarasas in them

Srivatsa Shandilya, founder, International Arts and Cultural Foundation

Prateeksha Kashi

VIDYA IYENGAR

What better way to pay tribute to a former Indian prime minister than through the various dance forms of the country? Photographer Srivatsa Shandilya, who is also the founder of International Arts and Cultural Foundation, and his team have put together Atal Kavya Kala Narthan, in memory of former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The initiative will feature 15 performers of dance forms such as Bharatanatyam, Odissi, Kathak, Kuchipudi and Mohiniattam, who will dance to Vajpayee's poetry set to tune. The event will take place on Dec.25, on the occasion of his 96th birth anniversary. "This is a change for dancers since they are used to bhajans. Also, many only know Vajpayee as a politician. So this was a learning experience for all of us," says Shandilya.

Supported by the union culture ministry, the visual presentation will come alive with dancers such as Prateeksha Kashi (Kuchipudi), Dr Rekha Raju (Bharatanatyam), Nandini Mehta (Kathak), and Karishma Ahuja (Odissi), to name a few. "I've read Vajpayee's poetry and learnt more about him. But the challenge was choosing works that had the elements of navarasas in them," says Shandilya.

He then took the help of one of his friends, a Hindi professor, to zero in on works that would suit a classical dance rendition. But the challenge didn't end there. In fact, it was just the beginning, because the chosen 12 works had to be set to music. Here, D S Srivatsa came to the fore. "Once all this ground work was complete, we approached various artistes from across the country. We were particular that we get artistes who perform different dance forms," says Shandilya, who has been working on this for over four months. The poems span different genres, including politics, nature and mythological stories.

While the performances are being held simultaneously in three cities – Bengaluru, New Delhi and Gwalior – the recorded event will be streamed on social media. "I was very particular about a performance in Gwalior because it is the birthplace of Vajpayee. The performances will be held in an auditorium, but with just the artiste's family members in attendance in light of the Covid-19guidelines," he says, adding that, Union Minister for Chemicals & Fertilizers, DV Sadananda Gowda, will be one of the attendees for the city event.

(*The event will take place on Dec. 25 and will be livestreamed on the social media pages of the foundation*)

Meenu Thakur

Nandini Mehta

City-based tennis player Adil Kalyanpur's new rap song is an ode to his 'first love' and favourite sport

SERVING A FRESH TUNE

MONIKA MONALISA

TENNIS player **Adil Kalyanpur** is winning hearts with his music the same way his efforts on the court earn him fans. Taking the route of artistic expression, Kalyanpur's new rap song, *If I could talk to tennis*, pays an ode to his favourite sport. He says the song is an emotional vent as the lockdown had kept him away from any competitions. "I have been playing tennis since I was five years old. It started off as a summer sport, without any agenda of picking it as a career," says Kalyanpur, adding that he started competing in tournaments at the age of nine, when his coaches began encouraging him.

Kalyanpur says he has a "typical underdog story" where tennis played an important role. "I was always the introvert and the underdog in school. Though I was playing other games like football and cricket, I started winning competitions in tennis. This made me feel fresh and motivated," says Kalyanpur, adding that this year was the longest break he has taken. Music, however, was his companion during the lockdown.

The 20-year-old Bengalurean returned to the city this weekend, after staying in a small town near Hanover, Germany, for his tennis practice. "All the tournaments will be starting next year, so I am currently training for them. Since no schedule is out yet, there is nothing in particular I am looking forward to but I just feel alive coming back to the court," says Kalyanpur, who was training with other Indian players like Sumit Nagal and Karman Kaur Thandi.

So will music take a back seat now that he is back to tennis, or as he calls it, his 'first love'? He promptly answers, "Of course. I just don't know the logistics of it yet, since training takes most of the time. I could be making music but might not do much for videos because that's what takes more time." Besides music and tennis, Kalyanpur is also excited meeting his family for Christmas, since he had not met them since August.

Writing this new song didn't take me much time since it came from an emotional place. I have learnt a lot from this sport and the song I penned is like my thank you note to tennis

Adil Kalyanpur, tennis player

Adil Kalyanpur

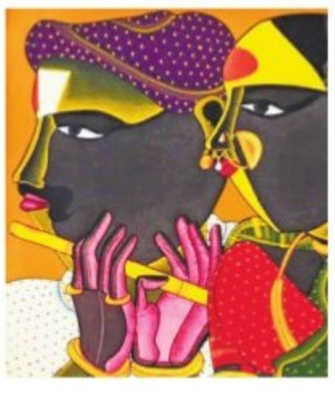
CITY READ

Corona warriors award ceremony held for police

Prakash Gowda, MD, Wekey Media, organised an event for the police department in association with Karnataka Small Scale Industries Association (KASSIA) on Dec. 17. The Corona Warrior Awards was created to recognise the work of frontline warriors who have been working towards the safety of people. The chief guests of the event were Sanjeev M Patil (DCP-West), Narayana (DCP-East), and Nanjunde Gowda (ACP-Vijayanagar).

India Art Festival goes virtual

Every year, India Art Festival hosts over 700 artists and 50 art galleries from across India and other countries, showcasing 6,000 works of art at New Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru. This year, this has been simulated together on the digital platform 'Virtual India Art Festival'. Patrons will get to see a total of 1,000 artworks. The virtual festival can be visited till Dec. 27 at indiaartfest.in



WHAT WHEN WHY WHERE

MEXICAN MEALS

Dig into Chilaquiles, which is a winter special. This Mexican lasagne has layers of tortilla chips, ranchero sauce, queso sauce, showered with grated cheese and topped with an egg sunny side up.
Where: Sanchez, UB City, Indiranagar
When: Till Dec. 31, 12pm to 11pm

FESTIVE DONUTS

Imagine that cute Santa face or a lovely Christmas tree as donuts for your Christmas celebrations! Mad Over Donuts is here to delight you with such gourmet donuts designed for Christmas! Available in Mumbai, Pune, Bengaluru, Delhi & Chennai till January 3. **For details, visit:** madoverdonuts.com; **Order at:** moddelivery.com

SEASON FOR SUNFLOWER

Soulflower assures you'll be looking gorgeous for those under-the-mistletoe moments. Treat yourself and your loved ones to a pampering experience this Christmas along with Soulflower Secret Santa Beauty Christma Gift Collection and Soulflower Lavender Christmas Set. **Available at:** sunflower.biz

WINTER MENU

Here's some winter fare that can chase away those chills. Prepared using local seafood, meats, and seasonal produce, the menu contains a mix of warming soups, mains and desserts.
Where: Smoke House Deli, Lavelle Road and Indiranagar
When: Ongoing

GOODBYE 2020: CELEBRATE THE YEAR ENDING WITH TWO DRINKS AT ₹20 ONLY. WHEN AND WHERE: SOCIAL, UNTIL DEC. 31, 4PM-8PM

Festive shopping

Phoenix Marketcity Bengaluru is all decked up in Christmas decor that includes a lights display, a Christmas tree, Santa welcoming visitors and more. Shoppers can also stand a chance to win prizes worth ₹1 crore, car, bike, etc. **Where:** Phoenix Marketcity **When:** Ongoing

Christmas menu

Sly Granny has introduced a new festive special menu, which includes Sweet Potato and Gruyere Croquettes, Braised Pork Belly, and Christmas cocktails like Spiced Apple Pie, Snow Capped Sour, and Mulled wine.
Where: Sly Granny, Indiranagar
When: Till Jan. 5

Shop till you drop

Head to this store and check out jewellery and clothing by different designers. The collection promises something for everyone with its different price ranges.
Where: The Emerald Store, Richmond Town
When: Ongoing

Asia's largest robotics challenge is back!

Avishkaar has opened registrations for its flagship global competition, Avishkaar League 2020. This year, the League aims to identify and celebrate superhero innovators that think differently to improve the world that is inundated by COVID-19. The competition has been designed for students between grades 1 to 9.
For details, call: 8506841515 or visit www.avishkaar.cc/avishkaar-league

X'mas storytelling

Class 7 student Arnay Agarwal is hosting a virtual storytelling session along with a Christmas concert through Storytelling Society of India. The other performers include Sia, Aditi and Atharv who will narrate and tell stories, Srenish who will perform on the tabla and Ayensh who will sing.
When: Dec. 23, 5 pm onwards
For details: WhatsApp 9538952052

In conversation

Ranga Shankara will hold a literary event for author Arshia Sattar's latest book, 'Maryada'. Kannada novelist and playwright Vivek Shanbag will be in conversation with her.
Where: Ranga Shankara foyer **When:** Dec. 27, 11am

Meet Santa Claus

Kids can have the chance to meet Santa Clause and his friends, like the elves, reindeers and teddy bears, at this city mall..
Where: Inorbit Mall, Whitefield
When: Dec. 25

QUICK FIX

What's cooking

IN YOUR KITCHEN?
We are hungry for recipes with minimum ingredients and maximum flavours. Share your quick-fix with us, along with step-by-step photos, at cityexpresschn@gmail.com.

CLASSIC BRITISH JACKET POTATOES

INGREDIENTS

- **Potato:** 4, large
- **Salt-reduced baked beans:** 1 can
- **Grated cheddar cheese:** 1/3 cup

METHOD

- Preheat oven to 200°C. Scrub potatoes with a brush. Pat dry with paper towels.
- Using a fork, pierce potatoes in about six places. Place directly on oven rack in the centre.
- Bake for 50 to 60 minutes or until tender when a skewer is inserted into the centre.
- Cut a deep cross on top of each potato. Using a clean tea towel to hold potato, squeeze base gently to open up the top.
- Place baked beans in a small saucepan over medium heat. Stir cook for 5 minutes or until heated through.
- Spoon over potatoes and top with cheese; serve immediately.

— Poonam Kapadia, Noida

SOUND BOARD

99 % INVISIBLE

Design is everywhere in our lives, perhaps most importantly in the places where we've just stopped noticing. 99% Invisible is a weekly exploration of the process and power of design and architecture.
- On Spotify

HOW I BUILT THIS WITH GUY RAZ

Journalist Guy Raz dives into the stories behind some of the world's best-known companies. How I Built This weaves a narrative journey about innovators, entrepreneurs and idealists—and the movements they built.
- On Apple Podcasts

THE SEEN AND THE UNSEEN

The Seen and the Unseen, hosted by writer Amit Varma, features long-form conversations that aim to give deep insights into the subjects being discussed. It promises some timeless and binge-worthy content.
- On Apple Podcasts

THE ANTHROPOCENE REVIEWED

The Anthropocene is the current geological age, in which human activity has profoundly shaped the planet and its biodiversity. On the podcast, author John Green (The Fault in Our Stars, Turtles All the Way Down) reviews different facets of the human-centred planet on a five-star scale.
- On Apple Podcasts

THE BIOLOGY OF SUPERHEROES

In this Science podcast, superheroes and science fiction meet the cutting edge of biological sciences. Hosted by two scientists, other scientists are brought in as guests to review superhero characters from movies or comic books based on the science behind what may have inspired every hero's power and abilities.
- On Apple Podcasts

POPULAR ON YOUTUBE

CHINNA THAMBI

Nandini is a rich girl raised by her three loving brothers. However, after an astrologer predicts that she will marry a man of her choice, her brothers try to protect her all her life.
- Cast: Prabhu, Kushboo, Aachi Manorama

MANNAN

Ambitious Industrialist Shanthi Devi(Vijay Shanthi) meets her match in her employee Krishnan(Rajinikanth). Who Impresses her but there is a huge ego war and tension between them.
- Cast: Rajinikanth, Ennatha Kannaiya, Goundamani

PANDIAN

Pandian is a police officer whose sister's husband goes missing. In order to find him and catch the culprits, he goes undercover.
- Cast: Rajinikanth, Kushboo, Archana Puran Singh

DHARMATHIN THALAIVAN

When Raju loses his soft-spoken, loving elder brother Balu in a fight, he gives up his violent ways. However, his life changes for the better when he meets his brother's lookalike, who is a criminal.
- Cast: Kushboo, Nassar, Prabhu

Scan this QR code to find out how your favourite celebs are coping with the lockdown.

WHAT'S ON TED TALKS

1 HOW FOLDING PAPER CAN GET YOU TO THE MOON BY ADRIAN PAENZA

Can folding a piece of paper 45 times get you to the moon? By seeing what happens when folding just one piece of paper, we see the unbelievable potential of exponential growth. This lesson will leave you wanting to grab a piece of paper to see how many times you can fold it! Lesson by Adrian Paenza, animation by TED-Ed.

2 MYSTERIES OF VERNACULAR: ROBOT BY JESSICA ORECK AND RACHAEL TEEL

In 1920, Czech writer Karel Capek wrote a play about human-like machines, thereby inventing the term robot from the Central European word for forced labor. Jessica Oreck and Rachael Teel explain how the science fiction staple earned its name.

3 YOUR HEALTH DEPENDS ON WHERE YOU LIVE BY BILL DAVENHALL

Where you live: It impacts your health as much as diet and genes do, but it's not part of your medical records. Bill Davenhall shows how overlooked government geo-data can mesh with mobile GPS apps to keep doctors in the loop. Call it "geo-medicine."

4 HOW DIVERSITY MAKES TEAMS MORE INNOVATIVE BY ROCÍO LORENZO

Are diverse companies really more innovative? Rocío Lorenzo and her team surveyed 171 companies to find out — and the answer was a clear yes. In a talk that will help you build a better, more robust company, Lorenzo explains how your company can start producing fresher, more creative ideas by treating diversity as a competitive advantage.

5 AN ENGINEER'S VISION FOR TINY FORESTS, EVERYWHERE BY SHUBHENDU SHARMA

A forest planted by humans, then left to nature's own devices, typically takes at least 100 years to mature. But what if we could make the process happen ten times faster? In this short talk, eco-entrepreneur (and TED Fellow) Shubhendu Sharma explains how to create a mini-forest ecosystem anywhere.

FIT BIT

MARICHYASANA B

(SAGE MARICHI'S POSE B)

It is named after the sage, Marichi. His name in Sanskrit means 'ray of light' and asana means 'pose' or 'posture'. This asana is an asymmetrical seated, forward fold with one leg in Padmasana. It forms part of the primary series in Ashtanga yoga, where the first four variations of Marichyasana are performed in sequence. Marichi is a mythological Hindu figure who is also the son of Brahma. He is said to be one of the seven seers, or wise lords, who heard Brahma's words and translated them into Sanskrit. These words were the divine law of the universe or dharma. It restores and rejuvenates the body as it calms the brain. It is a good pose for taking the attention and focus inwards. It is associated with balancing and purifying the Manipura chakra.

STEPS

- Sit with your legs stretched in front of you. Bend your left knee and place your ankle high on your right thigh.
- Bend your right leg, bringing your foot flat on the floor near your right buttock. Lift your hips and shift forward so that your left knee rests on the floor.
- Reach your right arm forward with an exhale, bringing your armpit against your shin. Rotate your arm to reach your hand behind your back.
- Now, reach your left arm behind your back with an exhale. Grab hold of your left wrist.
- Draw your belly in and fold deeper with an exhale, bringing your forehead to the floor.
- Hold the pose and take slow, deep breaths.
- Carefully rise with an inhale. Straighten your right leg, then use your hands to release your left foot.
- You can change sides.

BENEFITS

- Helps to restore and rejuvenate the body as it calms down the brain. It improves brain functions and provides peace and calmness.
- This pose helps you pay attention.
- It stretches the spine and shoulders.
- Helps in improving the functions of kidneys and liver too.
- It improves digestion and relieves you of constipation. Improves the blood circulation around the abdominal area and helps its health organs.
- This provides benefits to the shoulders and builds strength in the shoulder.
- It creates a twist in the human body by rotating shoulders and pelvis in both directions, which detoxifies the stomach, maintains spinal rotation and reduces back pain.

LIMITATIONS

- People suffering from slipped/herniated disc, sciatica, shoulder and knee injuries should not practise this.

— by N Elumalai, PhD scholar (Yoga Science) at Meenakshi Academy of Higher Education & Research, Chennai

NOW STREAMING

REGIONAL

LOVE MOCKTAIL (Kannada)

After rescuing a woman, Adi reminisces about his love life and tells her about all the heartbreaks he endured in his quest to find his true love.
Cast: Krishna Adithya, Milana Nagaraj, Amrutha Iyengar
- Watch on: Amazon Prime

MEMORIES (Malayalam)

Sam Alex, a drunkard ex-cop, is forced to investigate a series of murders which are committed in the same pattern. His search leads to a serial killer, and something more than what he expected.
Cast: Prithviraj Sukumaran, Sreejith Ravi, Vijayaraghavan
- Watch on: Disney+Hotstar

ANJAM PATHIRA (Malayalam)

The police are on the trail of a serial killer, but with the victims being fellow officers, will they be able to catch the killer and solve the case in time?
Cast: Kunchacko Boban, Jinu Joseph, Unnimaya Prasad
- Watch on: MX Player

9OML (Tamil)

Four girls, who are bored of their mundane lives, get a new lease of life when they befriend a practical and progressive girl.
Cast: Oviya, Bommu Laksmi, Masoom Shankar
- Watch on: Netflix

LAW (Kannada)

The moving struggle of a female law student fighting her own case to put a criminal behind bars. The plot further evaluates whether she really received justice by getting the criminal punished.
Cast: Ragini Prajwal, Avinash, Achyuth Kumar
- Watch on: Amazon Prime

All the streaming apps can be accessed on smartphones and smart TVs with Internet connection.

MAYABAZAR (Kannada)

An honest cop, a conman and a hopeless romantic form an unusual team during the days of demonetisation to pull off a scam. A scam that is bigger than demonetisation, but things go haywire.
Cast: Prakash Raj, Raj B. Shetty, Vasishta N. Simha
- Watch on: Amazon Prime

PRATI ROJU PANDAAGE (Telugu)

With only a few weeks left to live, an aging grandfather is visited by his grandson who wishes to fulfill his desires.
Cast: Mahesh Achanta, Ajay, Bhadram
- Watch on: Disney+Hotstar

FOREIGN

WONDER (English)

Based on the New York Times bestseller, this movie tells the incredibly inspiring and heartwarming story of August Pullman, a boy with facial differences who enters the fifth grade, attending a mainstream elementary school for the first time.
Cast: Jacob Tremblay, Owen Wilson, Izabela Vidovic
- Watch on: Netflix

THE TOWN (English)

A longtime thief, planning his next job, tries to balance his feelings for a bank manager connected to an earlier heist, and a hell-bent F.B.I Agent looking to bring him and his crew down.
Cast: Ben Affleck, Rebecca Hall, Jon Hamm
- Watch on: Netflix

THE CALL (Korean)

Two people live in different times. Seo-Yeon lives in the present and Young-Sook lives in the past. One phone call connects the two, and their lives are changed irrevocably.
Cast: Park Shin-Hye, Jong-seo Jun, Sung-ryung Kim
- Watch on: Netflix

UNCLE FRANK (English)

In 1973, when Frank Bledsoe and his 18-year-old niece Beth take a road trip from Manhattan to Creekville, South Carolina, for the family patriarch's funeral, they're unexpectedly joined by Frank's lover, Walid.
Cast: Paul Bettany, Sophia Lillis, Peter Macdissi
- Watch on: Amazon Prime

SUBSCRIPTION

Netflix: ₹ 199 per month
Amazon Prime: ₹ 129 per month
Zee5: ₹ 99 per month

Puppy love

Samyukta Hornad's latest Instagram post is bound to make you go 'aww'. The actor posted pictures of her surrounded by many dogs, and her hands seemed to have been full as she doled out scratches and head pats to them. She captioned the post, "sweet dreams are made of this..." Samyukta's love for her furry friends is no secret, especially after the actor even sang a song that talks about pet adoption.

Boys' day out

Boys and bikes are like a match made in heaven. Sandalwood star Darshan along with his gang of boys made a three-day trip to an undisclosed location. Giving him company were Prajwal Devaraj, Pannaga Bharana, Umapathy Srinivas Gowda and Chikkanna. They had a blast indulging in some outdoor activities like cricket and swimming. Darshan was back home on Sunday and posted some pics on his Instagram.

A still from the film

This 16-minute film shines a light on the loneliness felt by elderly parents and makes an appeal to youngsters to introspect on the issue

FOR OLD TIMES' SAKE

VIDYA IYENGAR

Children spread across the globe and senior parents at a loss... A common sight in urban cities, this issue was observed by voice coach and voice artiste Shilpi Das Chohan during her visits to old-age homes and retirement communities. This eventually translated into a film, titled *Poonam*, produced by the Bengalurean. Starring Rajit Gupta and Meeta Vasisht, the 16-minute film has recently won awards for the Best Short Film, Best Actress, and Best Actor at the Art Independent International Film Festival, Kerala. It has also won the Jury Award at Uruvatti International Film Festival in Tamil Nadu, and the Award of Recognition at Accolade Global Film Competition, California. The film has also been selected by Silk Road Film Awards, Cannes.

Directed by Sanjay Sanwal, Poonam is a story of two senior citizens, who find themselves abandoned and alone. "We wanted to spread the much-needed awareness on what such elders go through and to ask their children to introspect and, if possible, change how life goes on today," says Chohan, adding that all seniors yearn for is someone to talk to. "They suffer from loneliness, which is a disease in itself," she adds.

Though the idea was formulated in 2015, the challenge of getting funds and the right protagonists proved to be a hurdle. Work on the film began in September 2019 and the shooting was completed after a month. The post-production work had to be done in bits and pieces and was fully completed in October this year. "One of the most critical aspects of film-making is to decide on artistes who can do justice to the characters. We started our search from the select few we shortlisted. Most of them showed little or no interest, because we weren't a production house that had a repertoire of such projects. Also, 'elderly care' is not given the attention it deserves, and our director wasn't well-known yet," says Chohan.

Despite being tempted to give up, they continued their search. "The delays and refusals led us to widen our choices, because the story had to be told by an apt cast. It was essential that our audiences connected with the artistes playing Poonam and Suraj. Only then the story would evoke introspection," says Chohan about the film which was shot in Nainital. The refusals eventually led them in the right direction. "It led us to Rajit Kapur. He connected with the cause, the character and the film," says Chohan.

A movie buff, executive producer Anil Kumar P had always dreamt of making a meaningful movie. "I am sure people watching *Poonam* will introspect and take up the cause of elderly loneliness and their need for companionship more seriously instead of getting on with their lives," says Kumar.

> **We wanted to spread the much-needed awareness on what elders go through and to ask their children to introspect and, if possible, change how life goes on today. The elderly suffer from loneliness, which is a disease in itself. It was essential that our audiences connect with the actors, only then would the story evoke introspection**
>
> Shilpi Das Chohan, producer of the film

Jacket of all trades

PAIRED WITH PANACHE
Anuja Pandey

Come winter and it's time to breathe fresh air into our wardrobe. The act is similar to what nature does, shedding off what is old and fashioning herself a new plumage. Our wardrobe needs new moments of vogue as well, without losing sight of timeless classics. Winters are synonymous with coats and jackets and be it wool, suede or leather, they can make a difference to your look and mood.

Since winter is not harsh in Bengaluru, it's a good idea to refurbish something stylish from your existing wardrobe. According to designer Sounak Sen Barat, "Exaggerated shoulders and peplum waists are big this season. Loose fitted boyfriend jackets in '80s silhouettes are also a useful wardrobe essential that comes handy in layering." Barat, who is a slow fashion advocate, also suggests, "Repurpose your existing wardrobe and buy only what is necessary."

You don't have to rock only jeans or skirts with a jacket. Just as Bollywood and fashion weeks show, jackets go just as well with saris and Indo-Western outfits. Or you could try designers and labels who are engaging local artisans and do your part to help the economy. Here are some trends to check out:

1.Chequered print: Not just great at making a statement, tartan coats also break the monotony of any outfit, be it a mini skirt, baggy pants, sari or an A-line dress. Look into your mom's wardrobe since these are a '70s trend. Team it up with knee-high boots.

2.Fringe coats: These cowboy jackets are here to stay. The fringes could be at the sleeves or back, and pair well with suede boots.

3.Trench coats: These timeless pieces, in leather or even silk, up your style game. A silk trench coat is great not just for saris or traditional wear but can also be a head-turner with patent faux leather pants.

4.Capes: Team these with a sweater tucked into pants and croc-embossed equestrian high boots that have slight heels for an effortless look. A shimmery cape jacket looks wonderful in any length over Indian lehengas or skirts.

(The author is a lifestyle blogger and social media influencer)

FIT MATTERS

Coats should be a size bigger to give space for layering. Every wardrobe must have a few classics but some bright hues can also pep up dark wintry evenings, especially in these Covid-19 times. But if you go bright with one piece of clothing, it's best to keep the others neutral.

Designs by Sounak Sen Barat

ARE YOU GAME?
Anusha Ganapathi

(This economics graduate spends her leisure time preparing for the zombie apocalypse)

I wanted to take my time with Cyberpunk 2077 before a review. Instead, at the risk of getting boo-ed, this week's column reviews not one, but two games: a warm-up act for gamers who are still waiting for the ~70GB game to install in their systems.

Last week, I took another gulp from the refreshing stream of games on sale in the Steam store (for PC games). The first game is called Röki. Röki is based on Nordic folklore. Although the game looks cute and features two children solving cute puzzles in the way of their adventure — the story is quite dark. We learn about the stories of young Tove and her brother, Lars — whose childhoods are marred by the lack of parental figures. While the game does not allow us to engage in physical combat of any kind (pacifist and supposedly peaceful), it does not have a dearth of action. We come across several monsters along the way (are they metaphorical?), and several unfortunate events. These situations are loaded with lots of emotion – perhaps eliminating the need for more obvious violence.

Röki uses the old-timey adventure game format of puzzles based on clicking on interactable objects in the environment. This makes the pacing of the game a little slow. We might find ourselves getting the story aspect of a puzzle sequence, but the game is determined to drill the point a little deeper before we proceed. While Röki might teach us to be patient in the face of overwhelmingly slow internet connections and game installations, the second warm-up act could not be more different.

Genshin Impact is a free multiplayer game — playable for hours, till a potential paywall hit. The game's graphics are immediately comparable to Breath of the Wild, but is vastly superior — because it isn't restricted to a Nintendo device. That's right. GI allows for cross-platform play across PC, PS and even Mobile. The game is amongst the first to have the depth of graphics and game story across devices. I rank my level of graphics scale based on the realism with which blades of grass move in the game. GI comes closest to Ghost of Tsushima on this scale. GI is an action RPG, has some very cool combat visuals (based on elemental magic), and offers interesting weapons and character options as we level up in the story. I rate the games 4 snowballs out of 6 swords for being a fun diversion before another big game release.

PLAY ON
Arjun Sukumaran

(Arjun is a gamer, book lover and an all-round renaissance man)

The new generation of consoles is here, and yet the surprise hit of the PS5's early days is a remastered edition of a game that came out in 2009 for the PS3. Demon's Souls was the game that put From Software on the map and led to the creation of the Dark Souls trilogy and Bloodborne, and it remains one of the best games around. To be clear, everything I'm saying below is based on experiences with the original Demon's Souls; however, the remaster is incredibly faithful and so this should still be relevant if you're considering giving it a try.

Now, if you've heard anything about Demon's Souls, you've heard about its brutal, spirit-crushing, soul-destroying difficulty. And you've heard right, although that's nowhere near the whole story. This isn't an easy game, make no mistake, but it does give you a chance — no matter how miniscule. Let me explain what I mean by taking you through the beginning of the game.

The game's prologue starts off innocently enough. After plowing through the first few enemies you encounter, you feel like you're starting to get a grip on this game, and possibly even wondering what all the fuss was about. And then you walk through a gate and a boss demon the size of a house kills you.

THAT'S when the game begins.

But again, that's not the whole story. If you're very, very good, you can kill that first boss. You wind up in the same place as the rest of us who died, but with (I'm guessing here, I died screaming like everyone else and I won't try to pretend otherwise) a lot more souls and some useful loot, no doubt.

And that, in a nutshell, is Demon's Souls - Atlus' game is difficult, yes. You get thrown back to the start of the level everytime you die, yes. But they always, always give you a fair chance, even if it doesn't always seem like that. And it's that constant, tantalizing glimpse of a carrot that enables you to forge on through all that stick.

The gameplay takes some getting used to — in a world of games with protagonists who boast superhuman agility, Demon's Souls is the only one where you'll genuinely feel clumsy. Your character feels substantial when they move, like they have genuine weight. Even with the more nimble classes, dodging feels appropriately physical. Take the heavily-armoured Temple Knight, however, and a single dodge feels like an event. The physicality of the game doesn't stop there though – narrow corridors can impede the swing of your halberd, for example; which, it has to be said, is easily one of the more hilarious ways to die in gaming.

As for the story, it's incredibly cryptic at best and seemingly nonsensical at worst, but — like every other facet of the game — every bit of lore that you manage to decipher feels like an accomplishment. Boletaria's not a pretty world, and you'd hardly expect it to be, what with the whole being-overrun-by-demons thing; but it is a supremely engaging one. Bluepoint Games, who developed the PS5 remaster, deserve a shout-out here — by all accounts, they've made the game look absolutely fantastic and not out of place in 2020 at all. In an era of regenerating health, generous checkpoints and hand-holding UI, Demon's Souls remains a welcome — and, dare I say, refreshing — kick in the teeth. Seek it out, you won't regret it!

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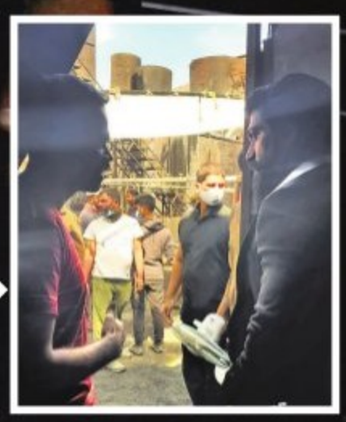
'I CAN'T DILUTE A STORY TO KEEP *KGF* FRANCHISE ALIVE'

...says Prashanth Neel, who has completed the shooting for the sequel, and is looking forward to start the post-production process, just as *KGF Chapter 1* completes two years of release

Yash



> I have just completed the shooting part now, which is more of a physical process. The mental process will begin now. The thought of KGF Chapter 2 coming to an end will come only when the film is out in theatres and I get to hear the response from the audience. So my mind is still in the work mode for *KGF*
>
> Prashanth Neel, director

A SHARADHAA

THE last phase of the shooting of *KGF Chapter 2,* that was going on at a brisk pace in Hyderabad, finally came to an end on Sunday. An update posted by director Prashanth Neel on his Twitter handle, attached with a group photo of himself along with actor Sanjay Dutt and the entire crew, gave the status of the project. He said, "Nothing short of a crazy, exhausting, and fulfilling shoot. The best team hands down!!!! @duttsanjay sir a true warrior in real life ? @TheNameIsYash a treat to work with as always An end to the climax shoot. Can't wait for the world to see #KGFChapter2 only on the big screen (sic)."

The team is returning to Bengaluru, and expressing his thoughts about the *KGF* franchise, director Prashanth Neel told *CE* over telephone, "I don't think I am wrapping up *KGF Chapter 2* now, I still have a long way to go. There is a lot of work in the post-production process, and I will be meeting all the actors during the dubbing. We also have to do a lot of promotions together. I have just completed the shooting part now, which is more of a physical process. The mental process will begin now. The thought of *KGF Chapter 2* coming to an end will come only when the film is out in theatres and I get to hear the response from the audience. So my mind is still in the work mode for *KGF*."

Prashanth Neel and Team

Yash-starrer *KGF Chapter 1* was released on Dec. 21 two years ago. The Kannada film, made under the banner of Hombale films, was the second film for Prashanth, after *Ugramm*. And it marked a pan-India presence after it was dubbed and released in Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Hindi as well.

Recalling the big buzz it made among the Indian and the global audiences at that time, Prashanth says it was a frightful moment for him, and that's the only one emotion always attached to the release date of Dec. 21, 2018 for him. "A hit will always be remembered by the audiences even after 10-12 years of its release. And the result that we got from *KGF Chapter 1* was a good turn of events for all of us. Whatever we are doing in *KGF Chapter 2,* which is on a bigger scale, is all because of the momentum that we got from *Chapter 1*," says Prashanth.

The sequel is produced by Vijay Kiragandur and has music by Ravi Basrur. Cinematography is by Bhuvan Gowda. The film features Srinidhi Shetty in the female lead role, along with Bollywood actor Raveena Tandon, Anant Nag, Prakash Raj and Malavika Avinash seen in prominent characters.

Now, as *KGF Chapter 2* nears completion, talk of the possibility of the team coming up with *KGF Chapter 3* has gathered pace. However, he tells *CE* that the question of making a *KGF Chapter 3* doesn't exist because it will not be a part of the story. "We had a bigger story to tell than we could pack in a single movie. That is why we made it in two parts. I can't dilute a story to keep a franchise alive," he explains.

Meanwhile, fans are expecting a treat from the production house, Hombale Films, on Monday, to celebrate two years of release of *KGF Chapter 1.* The team is also getting ready with a unique teaser to be unveiled on Jan.8 on Yash's birthday.

Millie Bobby Brown to star in *The Electric State*

CE FEATURES

ENOLA Holmes star Millie Bobby Brown is teaming up with *Avengers: Endgame* duo Anthony and Joe Russo for Universal Pictures' *The Electric State*.

The Russo Brothers will direct the film, which is an adaptation of Simon Stalenhag's graphic novel of the same title.

Brown, known for starring in Netflix's hit series *Stranger Things,* will feature as a teenage girl in an alternative future who realises that a strange but sweet robot who comes to her has actually been sent by her missing brother.

She and the robot set out to find the brother in an imaginative world of humans mixing with all manner of robots, uncovering a grand conspiracy in the process.

"We're thrilled to have this deal with Universal who has committed to a theatrical release of 'Electric State'.

"This is incredible news for us as filmmakers, and for audiences around the world who want an opportunity to experience films in theatres again. This is also a positive sign that, as vaccines become available, the theatrical market is returning," the Russo Brothers said in a statement.

The filmmaker duo will also produce the movie through their banner AGBO alongside Mike Larocca.

Christopher Markus and Stephen McFeely, who have collaborated with the Russo Brothers on films such as *Captain America: Winter Soldier, Captain America: Civil War,* and two *Avengers* movies, will adapt Stalenhag's novel.

Ramprasad Ki Tehrvi to release on January 1

CE FEATURES

SEEMA Pahwa's directorial debut *Ramprasad Ki Tehrvi* will release theatrically on January 1, 2021. The film is produced by Drishyam Films and Jio Studios.

Ramprasad Ki Tehrvi revolves around the Bhargava family that comes together for 13 days to perform the Tehrvi function after the head of the family passes away. The film features an ensemble cast of Naseeruddin Shah, Supriya Pathak, Konkona Sen Sharma, Parambrata Chatterjee, Vinay Pathak, Vikrant Massey and Manoj Pahwa. It was premiered at the MAMI Mumbai Film Festival last year.

"I am very happy that my film is the first release of 2021 in cinemas across India," Seema Pahwa shared. "The story came from my own personal experience – my father's demise many years ago, when our family got united. And since then, this story has been running in my head. Jio Studios and Drishyam Films have believed in my vision for which I am grateful. Now the film is over to the audience."

Sriimurali and *MadhaGaja* team overwhelmed with response to first-look teaser

CE FEATURES

THE *MadhaGaja* team is ecstatic with the response received by the first-look teaser of the Sriimurali-starrer, which was unveiled by director Prashanth Neel on Anand audio. It crossed 3.5 million views within three days of its release. Sriimurali took to social media to thank his fans for the love and affection they have showing towards him. The *Ayogya* director is thrilled to have his second venture catching this kind of attention. Umapathy S Gowda, the producer of *Hebbuli,* and the yet-to-be-released *Roberrt,* is bankrolling *MadhaGaja* under the banner of Umapathy Films.

MadhaGaja is the next offering from the *Bharaate* hero. It also consists of an ensemble cast, including Ashika Ranganath in the female lead role, and Jagapathi Babu playing the antagonist. The film's music is by Ravi Basrur and cinematography is by Naveen Kumar. It will also feature Tamil actor Devayani, who is back on the silver screen after a hiatus. The makers, who have completed 70 per cent of the shooting, plan to complete the entire filming by January-end. Post this, Sriimurali will be heading to *Bhageera*, a project directed by Dr Suri. The film's script has been written by Prashanth Neel, and it will be produced by Hombale Films. He will also be collaborating with producer Ramesh Reddy for another project.

A still from *MadhaGaja*

Anna Chazelle to direct movie on *The Trespassers*

CE FEATURES

FRENCH-American actor, writer and producer Anna Chazelle is set to direct the film adaptation of author Elmore Leonard's crime novel *The Trespassers.*

Written in 1958, the novel was published after Leonard's death in 2013.

According to reports, Troy Blake has adapted the screenplay.

The story is told from the point of view of a young woman who becomes frustrated with her mild-mannered husband.

"When the husband refuses to confront some men who are illegally hunting on the couple's remote homestead, his wife takes matters into her own hands," the synopsis read.

Megan Freels Johnston, the granddaughter of the late crime novelist, is producing the project via her Look At Me Films, along with Nick Terry of Zero Gravity Management. Stephen Gary and Peter Leonard are on board as executive producers.

'*The Trespassers* is such a relevant story because whether it's 1958 or today, many women can relate to the vulnerability of having to defend themselves against misogynistic men who have an expectation for getting what they want," Johnston said.

Chazelle will be the first woman director to helm an adaptation of Leonard's novel.

Remo D'Souza returns home after cardiac treatment

CE FEATURES

CHOREOGRAPHER-director Remo D'Souza has been discharged from hospital. Remo suffered cardiac problems earlier this month and was rushed to the hospital. He underwent angioplasty.

Remo shared a video on Instagram after returning home.

Earlier this month, After posting the video of his recovery, Remo's friends and colleagues wished him on Twitter.Actor Tiger Shroff wrote: "Time to come back stronger than ever."

"Street Dancer 3D" actor Varun Dhawan dropped a heart emoji on the post while the film's actress Shraddha Kapoor shared: "Warrior Remo Sir."

Choreographer Terence Lewis wrote: "This made my day! So happy to see you safe home with your loved ones! Stay blessed n I'm coming to meet u as soon as I'm back in the bay! Love n positive healing vibes to u bro!"